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The Greek Gods in Modern Scholarship

Interpretation and Belief in Nineteenth and
Early Twentieth Century Germany and Britain

Michael D. Konaris



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and Early Twentieth Century
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MICHAEL D. KONARIS

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To my parents

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Introduction

Jeder hat noch in den Alten gefunden, was er brauchte oder
wünschte, vorzüglich sich selbst.

Fr. Schlegel

The history of modern scholarship on Greek religion is an area that is increasingly attracting the attention both of current students of Greek religion as well as of students of modern intellectual, cultural, and religious history. In examining the interpretation of the Greek gods in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Germany and Britain, I wanted to produce a study that would be useful to those interested in Greek religion and the interpretive questions it raises and that could also contribute to the history of German and British Philhellenism and the broader intellectual, cultural and religious history of the period.

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries comprise a crucial period in the history of scholarship on Greek religion. During its course, interpretive approaches which had been influential for centuries declined and others emerged the impact of which is still felt today. Scholars drew on philology, archaeology, comparative mythology, anthropology, or sociology to put forward radically different theories of the Greek gods. Their debates over the interpretation of the gods were of no mere antiquarian interest. The book explores the modern beliefs, assumptions and agendas informing the rival theories that appeared in German and British scholarship in the light of their wider historical context. It lays particular stress on how closely implicated the interpretation of the Greek gods in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Germany and Britain was in contemporary discussions of major questions—from the origins and nature of religion or man's attitude to nature to the relation of classical

antiquity to Christianity or the relation between Western and 'Oriental' culture. As will be seen, clashes between the devout and proponents of 'scientific atheism', confessional rivalries between Catholics and Protestants or national rivalries between the Germans and the British were some of the factors that affected the study of Greek religion and its gods and gave it acute significance for the present.

In addition, the book considers the impact of nineteenth and early twentieth-century theories on the development of the study of Greek religion in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and seeks to draw implications for current debates and approaches. The interpretation of the Greek gods and of Greek polytheism as a whole continues to be heavily contested. Such questions as whether the Greek gods should be seen as powers or persons; how to account for their different aspects and functions; or whether Greek polytheism was a structured system or a semi-chaotic conglomerate are hotly debated in contemporary scholarship.¹ In addition to the question of influences, examining the writings of past scholars can recover insights relevant to current debates, or point to issues that have since been overlooked and would be worth revisiting. Furthermore, investigating how the field evolved in interrelation to its historical context provides an opportunity to stand back and reflect on its current state and on the questions and themes that dominate current discussions.² As Henrichs has emphasized, there is no 'definitive' view of the Greek gods: our views no less than those of our predecessors are *situations- und*

¹ W. Burkert, *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2011, second edition), pp. 332–3, R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 387–95, R. Parker, *On Greek Religion* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 84–98, H.S. Versnel, *Coping with the Gods* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), J.N. Bremmer, 'Introduction: The Greek Gods in the Twentieth Century', in J.N. Bremmer and A. Erskine (eds.), *The Gods of Ancient Greece. Identities and Transformations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 1–18 at pp. 15–17, J.N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 11, R. Seaford, 'Karl Kerényi's Interpretation of Dionysos', in R. Schlesier and R. Sanchiño Martínez (eds.), *Neuhumanismus und Anthropologie des griechischen Mythos. Karl Kerényi im europäischen Kontext des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Locarno: Rezzonico, 2006), pp. 95–104 at p. 95.

² A. Henrichs, 'Philologie und Wissenschaftsgeschichte: zur Krise eines Selbstverständnisses', in: H. Flashar (ed.), *Alttertumswissenschaft in den 20er Jahren* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1995), pp. 423–57 at pp. 431–2. Cf. J.I. Porter, 'Reception Studies: Future Prospects', in L. Hardwick and C. Stray (eds.), *A Companion to Classical Receptions* (Malden/Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 469–81 at p. 471.

zeitbeding.³ The most eloquent indicator of the value that the examination of the history of the discipline can have for the current study of Greek religion is that it has attracted the attention of such scholars of Greek religion as Bonnet, Borgeaud, Bremmer, Burkert, Detienne, Graf, Henrichs, Parker, Pirenne-Delforge, Schlesier, or Versnel.⁴ In the pages that follow my debt to their work will be obvious.

I focus primarily on German and British scholarship as, for all the significance of the work of scholars from other national traditions as of E. Renan (1823–92), L.-F.A. Maury (1817–92), or N.D.F. de Coulanges (1830–89), in the case of France, for example, some of the most important developments in the study of Greek religion during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries occurred in Germany, the source of *Altertumswissenschaft*, and in Britain, the centre of Darwinian anthropology. As will be seen, British scholars engaged in a long lasting dialogue with the works of their German counterparts which makes German and British scholarship suitable for a joint study. On occasion I draw parallels with the views of contemporary French scholars. However, a more thorough inquiry into how French scholarship, as well as how other traditions of European and North American scholarship, compare to the German and the British I leave for the future.

In recent years the history of classical scholarship has been illuminated from different angles—from assessments of the contribution of individual scholars or groups of scholars to studies of

³ A. Henrichs, *Die Götter Griechenlands. Ihr Bild im Wandel der Religionswissenschaft* (Bamberg: Buchner, 1987), p. 32.

⁴ W. Burkert, 'Griechische Mythologie und die Geistesgeschichte der Moderne', in *Les Études Classiques aux XIXe et XXe siècles: Leur Place Dans l'Histoire des Idées* (Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1980), pp. 159–207, Parker (2011), H.S. Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion II. Transition and Reversal in Myth and Ritual* (Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1994, second edition), M. Detienne, *The Creation of Mythology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), P. Borgeaud, *La Mythologie du Matriarcat. L'Atelier de Johann Jakob Bachofen* (Geneva: Droz, 1999), C. Bonnet, V. Pirenne-Delforge and D. Praet (eds.), *Les Religions Orientales dans le Monde Grec et Romain: Cent Ans après Cumont (1906–2006)*, (Brussels: Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome, 2009). From the numerous contributions of Bremmer, Graf, Henrichs, and Schlesier, I mention as examples: J.N. Bremmer, 'Myth and Ritual in Ancient Greece: Observations on a Difficult Relationship', in R. von Haehling (ed.), *Griechische Mythologie und frühes Christentum* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005), pp. 21–43, F. Graf, *Greek Mythology. An Introduction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), Henrichs (1987), R. Schlesier, *Kulte, Mythen und Gelehrte. Anthropologie der Antike seit 1800* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1994).

methodologies and continuities or discontinuities, to investigations of the institutional framework of classical studies.⁵ At the centre of this book stand major rival theories of interpretation of the Greek gods in nineteenth and early twentieth-century German and British scholarship after the end of the controversy surrounding Creuzer's *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker* (first edition, 1810–12), the beliefs and agendas underlying them in the light of their historical context, and their development in the course of time. The book focuses especially on two key questions that these theories sought to address, namely whether the original form of Greek religion was monotheistic or polytheistic, and how to account for the origins and functions of the major Greek gods. As regards the latter question, for reasons that will be discussed later, scholars in this period tended to place emphasis on Apollo as a primary test case for their views. The stress on the case of Apollo in the book reflects this 'bias'.

This study makes by no means the claim to provide a comprehensive account of German and British scholarship on the Greek gods during this period. I have largely left out the areas of *Kunstmythologie* and of philosophical approaches to the Greek gods which would require book-length investigations in their own right. Readers may further miss well-known scholars such as, for example, J.J. Bachofen (1815–87) on the German-speaking side, or G. Grote (1794–1871) and W. Pater (1839–94) on the British. In not including their work, I did not wish to deny its broader significance for the study of Greek religion and mythology. However, besides considering the writings of

⁵ For example, W.M. Calder III and R. Schlesier (eds.), *Zwischen Rationalismus und Romantik: Karl Otfried Müller und die antike Kultur* (Hildesheim: Weidmann, 1998), W.M. Calder III (ed.), *The Cambridge Ritualists Reconsidered* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991). On methodologies and continuities/discontinuities see H. Flashar, K. Gründer, and A. Horstmann (eds.), *Philologie und Hermeneutik im 19. Jahrhundert. Zur Geschichte und Methodologie der Geisteswissenschaften* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1979–1983) and M. Bollack and H. Wismann (eds.), *Philologie und Hermeneutik im 19. Jahrhundert. II Grundlagen der geisteswissenschaftlichen Forschung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1983). On the institutional basis of British classics see C. Stray, *Classics Transformed. Schools, Universities, and Society in England, 1830–1960* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). On the different methodologies that have been employed in the last years in studies of the history of classical scholarship see L. Hardwick and C. Stray, 'Introduction: Making Connections', in Hardwick/Stray (2008), pp. 1–9 at pp. 2–3, G.W. Most, 'Einleitung', in G.W. Most (ed.) *Arnaldo Momigliano. Ausgewählte Schriften zur Geschichte und Geschichtsschreibung*, vol. III: *Die moderne Geschichtsschreibung der Alten Welt* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2000), pp. vii–xix at p. xiii.

major figures like K.O. Müller or Max Müller, who either formulated or were the most influential advocates of the specific theories investigated in this book, I wanted to shift attention to the case of less known scholars who played an important, if unacknowledged, role in the history of the discipline, or whose views reflect or distort significant trends of the period.

In particular, the first chapter examines variations of the method of physical interpretation both independent of, and within the context of Indo-European Comparative Mythology. Physical interpretation was the single most influential method of interpretation of the Greek gods in both German and British scholarship for the greater part of the nineteenth century. The chapter focuses on the work of P.W. Forchhammer (1801–94), F.G. Welcker (1784–1868), and L. Preller (1809–61), and in a section on Indo-European Comparative Mythology, on that of F. Max Müller (1823–1900) and W.H. Roscher (1845–1923). These scholars belonged in part to different generations, did not necessarily regard themselves as members of the same ‘school’ and their approaches can display significant methodological differences. I decided, however, to treat them in the same chapter as they can be said to be in the same interpretive tradition to the extent that in their account of the Greek gods they had fundamentally (or largely in the case of Welcker) recourse to physical interpretations. More scholars from this tradition are examined in the book than from any other, in part to reflect the prominence of physical interpretation in nineteenth-century scholarship.

The second chapter examines the theory that the major Greek gods had been tribal gods and the related theory that they had been universal gods. Both theories had their roots in the work of K.O. Müller (1797–1840), a founder of the historical-critical approach, and were further developed by H.D. Müller (1819–93) and E. Curtius (1814–96). These theories arguably provided the most important alternative to physical interpretations of the Greek gods before the emergence of anthropology and the rivalry between them was a dominant theme in German scholarship from the 1820s to the 1890s. The writings of K.O. Müller appeared earlier than those of the first scholar examined in the chapter on physical interpretation, P.W. Forchhammer, and, furthermore, in many ways his work can be seen as responding to that of earlier scholars such as G.F. Creuzer (1771–1858). However, I examine it in the second chapter as I felt that his, and especially his followers’ views, would be better

understood if the views of scholars in the physical tradition were discussed first.

As we shall see, all three advocates of the historical-critical approach treated had ties to the University of Göttingen, which invites the question of the relation between interpretive approach and institutional affiliation. Several German universities became associated with particular traditions of interpretation in line with their political or confessional allegiances passed on through successive generations of teachers. Thus at Königsberg the tradition of rationalist criticism of C.A. Lobeck (1781–1860) was carried on by his pupil, K. Lehrs (1802–78).⁶ Leipzig was the centre of ‘Saxonian rationalism’, an eminent representative of which in the field of classical scholarship was G. Hermann (1772–1848).⁷ After the end of C.G. Heyne’s long tenure,⁸ Göttingen as well became associated with strongly anti-mystical, rationalist views. The advocates of the historical-critical approach may not have been considered rationalists in the sense of Lobeck or Hermann, but they shared, in the eyes of their critics, an ‘enlightened’ view of Greek religion. In considering the role of universities, however, it should also be noted that, Heidelberg, for example, was at the same time home both to the romantic Creuzer and the rationalist J.H. Voss (1751–1826),⁹ or that in England, Oxford was home at the same time to the champion of Indo-European Comparative Mythology, Max Müller, and to one of his greatest critics, the anthropological writer A. Lang.¹⁰

The third chapter focuses on Hermann Usener’s (1834–1905) theory of *Augenblicks*- and *Sondergötter*. Although Usener employed an Indo-European comparative framework in his study of ancient

⁶ C. Bursian, *Geschichte der classischen Philologie in Deutschland von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich/Leipzig: Oldenbourg, 1883), p. 718.

⁷ Cf. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Geschichte der Philologie* (Stuttgart/Leipzig: Teubner, 1998), p. 49.

⁸ On the romantic tendencies in Göttingen at the time see O. Gruppe, *Geschichte der klassischen Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte während des Mittelalters im Abendland und während der Neuzeit* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1921), p. 112. On the intellectual climate at Göttingen in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century see further L. Marino, *Praeceptores Germaniae. Göttingen 1770–1820* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1995).

⁹ O. Pöggeler, ‘Einführung’ [Section V: *Mythengeschichte und Religion*], in F. Strack (ed.), *Heidelberg im säkularen Umbruch* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987), pp. 441–3 at p. 441.

¹⁰ On Classics in nineteenth-century Oxford see C. Stray (ed.), *Oxford Classics. Teaching and Learning 1800–2000* (London: Duckworth, 2007).

religions and, to an extent, advanced physical interpretations, I chose not to include him in the first chapter on physical interpretation, but rather to discuss his work in a separate chapter after the examination of advocates of the historical-critical approach, as the theory of *Sondergötter* can be seen as the contrasting pole to the theory of universal gods.

The fourth chapter examines British responses to German scholarship and the treatment of the Greek gods in the new context created by anthropology and, later, sociology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the work of A. Lang (1844–1912), L.R. Farnell (1856–1934) and J.E. Harrison (1850–1920).

Finally, the Conclusion looks at influences on, and developments in, the study of the Greek gods in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

I have tried to represent as accurately as I could the views of the scholars under examination and avoid such pitfalls confronting the study of past texts, as, for example, ‘the mythology of coherence’,¹¹ pointing to shifts or divergences within the same work, or between works from different times in a scholar’s career, or addressed to different audiences and so forth. I would like to underline, however, that both in its account and analysis of the various theories it investigates and in its areas of emphasis and organization of material, the present study evidently provides but one interpretation of past scholarship.

By way of background, the introduction provides a brief overview of major theories of interpretation of the Greek gods from antiquity to the eighteenth century and then considers the transition to the nineteenth.

Physical and moral allegory goes at least as far back as Theagenes of Rhegium in the sixth century BC.¹² According to Porphyry, Theagenes held that the fights of the gods in Homer were to be seen as struggles of elements: ‘dryness struggles against humidity, heat against cold . . . these are the struggles that Homer depicted by giving

¹¹ On the mythology of coherence, whereby in representing the views of a writer one sets them forth in a coherent form that they might have lacked see Q. Skinner, ‘Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas’, in J. Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), pp. 29–67 at pp. 38–42.

¹² G.R. Boys-Stones, *Post-Hellenistic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 31.

to fire the names of Apollo, Helios and Hephaistos, to water those of Poseidon and Scamander... in the same way, he sometimes gave names of gods to dispositions of the soul, to thinking that of Athena, to madness that of Ares.¹³ Physical interpretation reappears in, for example, the Derveni papyrus, a commentary on an Orphic theogony from the fourth century BC,¹⁴ and was taken up on a large scale by the Stoic philosophers.¹⁵ According to the exposition of Stoic views in Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*, 'Aër autem... interiectus inter mare et caelum Iunonis nomine consecratur... Apollinis nomen est Graecum, quem solem esse volunt, Dianam autem et lunam eandem esse putant.'¹⁶

By contrast, in his *Τερά Αναγραφή*, Euhemerus (c. 300 BC) maintained that, while travelling on the island of Panchaia, he found inscriptions which indicated that the Greek gods had originally been historical individuals such as kings or generals.¹⁷ Along similar lines, Persaeus, a student of Zeno of Kitium, advanced the view (perhaps already advocated in the fifth century by Prodicus) that the gods had originally been men who had made significant discoveries for the improvement of human life.¹⁸ The theory that the gods were deified mortals met with strong reaction. Plutarch, for example, accused Euhemerus of inventing himself 'copies of an incredible and non-existent mythology'.¹⁹ Euhemerism became popular with Christian writers attacking Greek and Roman religion.²⁰ Drawing on Greek

¹³ Porphyry, *Homeric Questions* I, 240.14–241.12 quoted in L. Brisson, *How Philosophers Saved Myths. Allegorical Interpretation and Classical Mythology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 35–6.

¹⁴ W. Burkert, 'Orpheus und die Vorsokratiker. Bemerkungen zum Derveni-Papyrus und zur pythagoreischen Zahlenlehre', *Antike und Abendland* XIV, 1968, pp. 93–114 at p. 94. On allegory in the Derveni Papyrus see D. Obbink, 'Allegory and Exegesis in the Derveni Papyrus: the Origin of Greek Scholarship', in G.R. Boys-Stones (ed.), *Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition. Ancient Thought and Modern Revisions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 177–88.

¹⁵ Graf (1993), pp. 194–5. On Stoic allegory see further G.R. Boys-Stones, 'The Stoics' Two Types of Allegory', in Boys-Stones (2003), pp. 189–216.

¹⁶ Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* II. xxvi–xxvii. D. Frede, 'Theodicy and Providential Care in Stoicism', in D. Frede and A. Laks (eds.), *Traditions of Theology. Studies in Hellenistic Theology, its Background and Aftermath* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2002), pp. 85–117 at p. 102.

¹⁷ Graf (1993), pp. 191–2.

¹⁸ On Prodicus see R. Parker, *Athenian Religion: a History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 213, n. 56.

¹⁹ Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 23. 360. Cf. Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* I.xlii.119.

²⁰ S.R.F. Price, 'Latin Christian Apologetics: Minucius Felix, Tertullian, and Cyprian', in M. Edwards, M. Goodman and S. Price (eds.), *Apologetics in the Roman*

sources in the Euhemerist tradition like Diodorus, Tertullian (c.150–222 AD), argued, for example, that Saturn had been a man: an exile to Italy who had taught the local peoples various skills such as the art of writing and the use of coins.²¹

In his *Περὶ Ἰσίδος καὶ Ὀσίριδος* Plutarch mentioned a further theory: the myths about Typhon, Osiris and Isis could be seen as referring to ‘the experiences neither of gods nor of men but of great daemons’.²² Plutarch related that, according to Pythagoras, Plato and others, who had themselves been following earlier thinkers, daemons were beings stronger than men yet not completely divine.²³ The ‘daemonological’ theory too was taken up by Christian writers, who argued that the Greek and Roman gods were daemons, inferior to the true Christian God.²⁴

Furthermore, in their attempts to account for the origin of polytheism, Christian writers also argued that the gods of polytheistic religions had arisen out of borrowings from, or misinterpretations of, the Bible.²⁵

These theories continued to be influential for centuries. J. Seznec has emphasized how the Greek gods ‘survived’ in the culture and art of the Middle Ages.²⁶ In the dictionaries and compendia on the myths of antiquity that appeared in this period, and subsequently during the Renaissance, physical and moral allegory and Euhemerism were among the chief theories employed.²⁷

The eighteenth century ushered in a period of renewed interest in the religions of the ancient world including Greece during which they often became an object of contention between devout Christian writers and critics of established religion in the name of the

Empire. Pagans, Jews and Christians (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999a), pp. 105–29 at p. 125. M. Bull, *The Mirror of the Gods* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 15.

²¹ Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 10. 7–9.

²² Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 25. 360.

²³ Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 25. 360.

²⁴ Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 23.11, Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 27.

²⁵ Price (1999a), pp. 125–6.

²⁶ J. Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 3.

²⁷ Seznec (1981), pp. 11–121. Cf. Bull (2005), A. Momigliano, ‘Historiography of Religion: the Western Tradition’, *Ottavo Contributo alla Storia degli Studi Classici e del Mondo Antico* (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1987a), pp. 27–44 at p. 37. See also Gruppe (1921), pp. 29ff. Byzantine scholars, as well, discussed the Greek gods in terms of theories going back to antiquity: Brisson (2004), pp. 107–25 esp. p. 114.

Enlightenment.²⁸ Although there appeared some works that dealt exclusively with Greek religion, the main tendency at the time was for general accounts of ancient and modern polytheistic religions as the religions of the native peoples of America and the Far East became increasingly known in Europe.²⁹ Fundamental to eighteenth-century enquiries, from B. Fontenelle's *De l'Origine des Fables* (1724) to C. Dupuis' *De l'Origine de Tous les Cultes* (1795), was the question of origins to which immense interpretive value was attached.³⁰ As a research principle, this remained highly influential throughout the course of the nineteenth century³¹ and into the twentieth.³² The emphasis that tended to be placed on the explanation of myths during this period³³ should not obscure the fact that rituals as well attracted attention. Indeed, Fontenelle argued that pagan religions consisted of practises and that those who conducted them could believe whatever they wished.³⁴

The crux of the religious investigations of the time was whether monotheism or polytheism had been the original religion of human-kind.³⁵ In this question the validity of Christian accounts of the

²⁸ On the study of ancient religions in the eighteenth century see F.E. Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), C. Grell, *Le Dix-huitième Siècle et l'Antiquité en France 1680–1789*, vol. II (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1995), C. Martinez Maza, 'De la Théologie à l'Anthropologie: Utilisation du Paganisme Gréco-Romain dans l'Europe du XVIIIe Siècle', in C. Avlami, J. Alvar and M. Romero Recio (eds.), *Historiographie de l'Antiquité et Transferts Culturels* (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2010), pp. 85–98, P. Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966).

²⁹ Manuel (1959), pp. 7, 15ff, Martinez Maza (2010), pp. 93–4.

³⁰ Manuel (1959), pp. 133–4, C. Grell, *Le Dix-huitième Siècle et l'Antiquité en France 1680–1789*, vol. I (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1995), pp. 584–5.

³¹ Schlesier (1994), p. 158, Graf (1993), p. 33.

³² Henrichs (1987), p. 12.

³³ On eighteenth-century views of myth see L.M. Gisi, *Einbildungskraft und Mythologie. Die Verschränkung von Anthropologie und Geschichte im 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), Manuel (1959), Grell (1995), B. Feldman and R.D. Richardson, *The Rise of Modern Mythology, 1680–1860* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972).

³⁴ 'Il y a lieu de croire que, chez les païens, la religion n'était qu'une pratique dont la spéculation était indifférente. Faites comme les autres, et croyez ce qu'il vous plaira. . . Aussi voit-on que toute la religion païenne ne demandait que des cérémonies, et nuls sentiments du cœur.' B. Fontenelle, *Histoire des Oracles* [1686] (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1966), p. 44.

³⁵ On the debate on *Urmonotheismus* versus *Urpolytheismus* in the period see F. Schmidt, 'Polytheisms: Degeneration or Progress?', in F. Schmidt (ed.), *The Inconceivable Polytheism. Studies in Religious Historiography (History and Anthropology 3* (1987), pp. 9–60, Grell II (1995), pp. 930–51.

origins of religion was at stake. As Schmidt underlines, 'he who upheld the idea that polytheism was the primary religion of humanity, undermined Providence and put in doubt the absolute necessity of religion for man.'³⁶ According to the conventional Christian position, the original religion of humankind had been monotheistic—the true religion revealed by God. Owing to human weakness, that religion was lost, giving way to polytheism, except in the case of the Jews and, according to some writers, certain elite groups among other peoples.³⁷

The notion of *Urmonotheismus* met with opposition from thinkers like D. Hume (1711–76).³⁸ In *The Natural History of Religion* (1757) Hume argued that the human mind 'rises gradually, from inferior to superior' and from the concrete to the abstract. Consequently, the abstract concept of a single Supreme God could not have been formed at an early stage.³⁹ Thus Hume emphasized that 'polytheism or idolatry, was and necessarily must have been, the first and most antient religion of mankind'.⁴⁰ In addition, Hume laid stress on the alleged tolerant nature of polytheism in contrast to the intolerance of monotheism.⁴¹

Despite the voices of criticism, theories of *Urmonotheismus* remained prominent in the remainder of the eighteenth century and, indeed, throughout the nineteenth century. Thus a case for Greek *Urmonotheismus* from a Christian perspective appears in Bergier's work on the origins of the pagan gods. Bergier posed the question of how did a people as enlightened as the Greeks succumb to the folly of paganism. He argued that Greek religion had not begun with polytheism and idolatry. In his view, the Greeks had initially known a single eternal God.⁴² Under Jewish influence they had at first

³⁶ Schmidt (1987), pp. 23–4. On *Urmonotheismus* or 'primitive monotheism' see further Manuel (1959), pp. 57ff.

³⁷ Grell II (1995), pp. 882–913.

³⁸ Manuel (1959), p. 174, Grell II (1995), pp. 936–8.

³⁹ D. Hume, *The Natural History of Religion* (London: Millar, 1757), p. 5.

⁴⁰ Hume (1757), p. 3. Cf. Momigliano (1987a), p. 28.

⁴¹ Hume (1757), pp. 58–62, Schmidt (1987), pp. 24–5. Gibbon vindicated polytheism on similar grounds: J. Scheid, 'Polytheism Impossible; or, the Empty Gods: Reasons Behind a Void in the History of Roman Religion', in Schmidt (1987), pp. 303–25 at p. 313.

⁴² '... il paroît certain que dans les premiers temps les Grecs ont connu & adoré un seul Dieu éternel.' N.S. Bergier, *L'Origine des Dieux du Paganisme; et le Sens des Fables Découvert par une Explication Suivie des Poésies d'Hésiode*, vol. I (Paris: Humblot, edition of 1774), p. 13, cf. Grell II (1995), p. 908.

worshipped solely Ouranos. Their monotheistic worship gradually degenerated into the worship of Saturn and the Titans and later into the worship of Zeus and the Olympians.⁴³

Theories of *Urmonotheismus* were also advanced by Deist writers who sought to demonstrate that the original religion of humankind had been similar to the rational, monotheistic, natural religion they themselves adhered to.⁴⁴

Related to theories of *Urmonotheismus* was the attempt to demonstrate the presence of a monotheistic tendency within the polytheistic worships that emerged with the degeneration of *Urmonotheismus*. Again, this is a prominent theme in both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writings. An essential element of this alleged monotheistic tendency was the notion of a Supreme Deity. Thus Voltaire, a chief propagator of Deist ideas in France, noted that the major criticism levelled against the Greeks and the Romans in his day concerned the plurality of the gods. He emphasized that, in fact, they only had a single Supreme God.⁴⁵ The theory of a monotheistic tendency in the polytheistic religions of antiquity often took the form of the 'double-truth' doctrine. According to this doctrine, in contrast to the masses who had been given to polytheism, the pagan elites, be they politicians, priests or initiates in mysteries, had been worshippers of a single God.⁴⁶ A characteristic formulation of this doctrine appears in Voltaire's article on idolatry in the *Encyclopédie* in which it was suggested that in virtually every pagan religion there had been a contrast between a secret monotheistic *Théologie sacrée* expounded in the mysteries and the *erreur populaire*.⁴⁷

With respect to the interpretation of the ancient gods, the theories advanced by eighteenth-century writers were again largely those developed in antiquity.⁴⁸ In the first decades of the eighteenth

⁴³ Grell II (1995), p. 909.

⁴⁴ Manuel (1959), pp. 57ff., Schmidt (1987), p. 18.

⁴⁵ Voltaire, *Mélanges* (1761), 'Polythéisme', *Dictionnaire philosophique*, pp. 242–3, quoted in Grell II (1995), p. 933.

⁴⁶ Manuel (1959), pp. 65–6. Grell II (1995), pp. 900–13.

⁴⁷ Voltaire, 'IDOLE, IDOLATRE, IDOLATRIE', in *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers*, vol. VIII, (Neufchâtel, 1765), pp. 500–4 at p. 503. Grell II (1995), pp. 933–4.

⁴⁸ F.E. Manuel, *The Changing of the Gods* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1983), p. xiii, Manuel (1959), pp. 7–9. G. Vico (1688–1744) proceeded along different lines: Graf (1993), pp. 17–18.

century, Euhemerist explanations appeared to have been widespread.⁴⁹ Chevalier de Jaucourt attested to their popularity in his article on mythology in the *Encyclopédie*.⁵⁰ A wide range of theories put forward in the late seventeenth and in the eighteenth centuries can loosely be seen as being in the Euhemerist tradition.⁵¹ Perhaps the most famous eighteenth-century Euhemerist work is A. Banier's (1673–1741) revealingly entitled *La Mythologie et les Fables Expliquées par l'Histoire* (1738).⁵² According to Banier, 'idolatry' had started with the worship of celestial bodies, especially of the sun. This was followed by the worship of other natural elements and, ultimately, by the worship of humans.⁵³

According to one strand in Christian mythological writings reminiscent of the writings of the Christian apologists, the pagan gods were to be seen as distorted images of figures from the Bible. Thus P.-D. Huet (1630–1721), bishop of Avranches, maintained in his *Demonstratio Evangelica* (1679) that all paganism, be it Egyptian, Indian, Chinese, Greek, German or Peruvian, ultimately derived from the Jewish tradition and that most of the important pagan deities were based on the figure of Moses.⁵⁴ In the same tradition, É. Fourmont (1683–1745) argued that the Phoenicians had deified the Hebrew Patriarchs and transmitted their gods to the Egyptians and they to the Greeks. 'Abraham was Saturn,' he stated, 'Issac was *Ζεύς* or *Jupiter*, and Ishmael *Dis* or *Pluto*.'⁵⁵ The notion that the religions of antiquity had originated in the traditions of a single people—what Grell calls 'le mythe du peuple instituteur'—exercised a powerful grip over the imagination of both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers. In the course of time, several alternatives like Egypt, China or India were proposed as the cradle of ancient religions.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ Gruppe (1921), p. 62.

⁵⁰ 'La foule des modernes s'est rangée de son [Euhemeros] avis.' L. de Jaucourt, 'Mythologie', in *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers*, vol. X (Neufchâtel, 1765), pp. 924–6 at p. 924.

⁵¹ Manuel (1959), pp. 103ff.

⁵² Feldman/Richardson (1972), p. 86.

⁵³ Banier I (1738), pp. 170ff., 411.

⁵⁴ Grell II (1995), pp. 890–1.

⁵⁵ É. Fourmont, *Réflexions Critiques sur les Histoires des Anciens Peuples* (Paris: Chez Musier Pere, Jombert, Brissot, 1735), Book II, 3.11 cited in Feldman/Richardson (1972), p. 84. Cf. Gruppe (1921), p. 64.

⁵⁶ Grell II (1995), pp. 962–76. On modern views of Egypt as the source of religious wisdom see J. Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian. The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

Bayle's *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (1697) is representative of another approach that gained currency in the period.⁵⁷ Objecting to attempts to explain the 'irrational' and 'immoral' elements of Greek mythology through allegory, P. Bayle (1647–1706) argued that the Greeks believed literally in their myths and portrayed Greek religion as being on a par with the religions of contemporary 'savages'.⁵⁸ A similar tendency is visible in the writings of B. Fontenelle (1657–1757).⁵⁹ In his *Histoire des Oracles* (1686) and *De l'Origine des Fables* (1724) Fontenelle sought to penetrate into the mentality of 'primitive' peoples.⁶⁰ In his view, the peoples who had not been acquainted with the Jewish tradition had originally lived in a state of 'barbarism' similar to that of modern 'savages' like the Iroquois. He famously maintained that the 'Greeks were, for a while, savages, just as much as were the Americans' and that 'there is reason to believe that the Americans would have come eventually to think as rationally as the Greeks, if they had had the time [if the Europeans had not arrived]'.⁶¹ Rejecting the allegorical interpretation of myths, he argued, 'let us not look for anything in the fables except the history of the errors of the human spirit'.⁶²

The notion of a 'primitive' mentality observable both amongst ancient and modern polytheistic peoples and characterized by a deficiency in reason and the view that polytheistic religions originated in an error of human reasoning which the modern rational investigator undertook to expose are themes that re-appear in the writings of nineteenth-century anthropologists. As we shall see, Andrew Lang (1844–1912), a major popularizer of Tylorian anthropology, placed himself in the tradition of eighteenth-century writers on ancient religions like Fontenelle.⁶³

In the last decades of the eighteenth century, the approach of Bayle and Fontenelle, and of other writers like de Brosses, was rivalled by symbolism and the reiteration of physical interpretations in the work

⁵⁷ Manuel (1959), pp. 24–40.

⁵⁸ Graf (1993), p. 14, Manuel (1959), pp. 26–8, Feldman/Richardson (1972), pp. 19–24.

⁵⁹ Manuel (1959), pp. 41–53, Bremmer (2005), pp. 21–2, Graf (1993), pp. 14–15.

⁶⁰ Bremmer (1999), p. 55, Feldman/Richardson (1972), p. 8.

⁶¹ Feldman/Richardson (1972), p. 16. J.-R. Carré (ed.), *Fontenelle. De l'Origine des Fables* [1724] (Paris: Alcan, 1932), pp. 31–2, Detienne (1986), p. 5.

⁶² Feldman/Richardson (1972), p. 18. Carré (1932), p. 39.

⁶³ Feldman/Richardson (1972), p. 7.

of R. Payne-Knight (1750–1824) or C.F. Dupuis (1742–1809).⁶⁴ Payne-Knight's *An Account of the Remains of the Worship of Priapus* (1786) was supposedly based on a report claiming that images of male genitalia were offered to local saints at the village of Isernia in southern Italy.⁶⁵ According to Payne-Knight, the phallic imagery and rituals went back to antiquity and were to be understood symbolically. He suggested that the phallus symbolized the generative powers of God and the female parts the generative powers of nature or matter.⁶⁶ The emphasis which Payne-Knight placed on phallic elements and the ample illustrations in support of his thesis teased and scandalized contemporary mores.⁶⁷ As we shall see, one of the reasons driving the furious reaction of rationalist classical scholars against symbolical interpretations of Greek religion was their indecent stress on phallic elements. To return to Payne-Knight, he advanced solar and, more broadly, physical interpretations of the gods of ancient religions. Thus he maintained that the name of Zeus was 'originally one of the titles or epithets of the Sun'. Moreover, drawing on Macrobius he held that Apollo stood for the diurnal, 'Dionysius' or Bacchus for the nocturnal sun.⁶⁸ He further placed emphasis on the figure of Osiris/Bacchus, stating that 'this Deity is celebrated by the ancient Poets as the Creator of all things, the Father of Gods and Men'.⁶⁹

Dupuis was a member of the National Convention at the time of the French Revolution. His *Origine de Tous les Cultes, ou Religion Universelle* (1795) was pervaded by revolutionary anti-clerical ideas.⁷⁰ According to Dupuis, the Greek gods largely derived from Egypt.⁷¹ Moreover, like Payne-Knight, Dupuis followed Macrobius in putting forward solar interpretations of Bacchus, Osiris, Apollo as well as of

⁶⁴ Manuel (1959), p. 248.

⁶⁵ On Payne-Knight see Feldman/Richardson (1972), pp. 249–56, S.C. Humphreys, *The Strangeness of the Gods* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 207–10.

⁶⁶ R. Payne-Knight, *An Account of the Remains of the Worship of Priapus* (London: Spilsbury, 1786), p. 47.

⁶⁷ Feldman/Richardson (1972), p. 249.

⁶⁸ Payne-Knight (1786), pp. 119, 134.

⁶⁹ Payne-Knight (1786), pp. 26–7.

⁷⁰ Feldman/Richardson (1972), p. 276. On Dupuis see Manuel (1959), pp. 263–70, Feldman/Richardson (1972), pp. 276–87, Grell II (1995), pp. 958–61.

⁷¹ C. Dupuis, *Origine de Tous les Cultes, ou Religion Universelle*, vol. III (Paris: Agasse, 1795), p. 9.

Christ.⁷² In his view, each sun-deity tended to represent a different aspect of the sun. Thus Apollo was the diurnal sun-god. Considered as operating in the sublunary world the sun was given the names of Bacchus or Osiris etc.⁷³ This Bacchus-Osiris, Dupuis underscored, was associated with the fertility of the earth.⁷⁴ Translated into English, German and Spanish, Dupuis' *Origine* was one of the best-known works on the religions of antiquity before Creuzer's *Symbolik*.⁷⁵

The transition to the nineteenth century was predictably marked by a series of continuities and discontinuities. Writing in the 1860s Petersen maintained that while a 'more comprehensive erudition and sharper criticism distinguish our century' one-sided earlier trends continued to make their presence felt in the study of Greek mythology.⁷⁶ As will be seen, for a great part of the nineteenth century, the questions that were prominent in the study of ancient mythologies in the eighteenth century continued to be debated, and some of the old interpretive approaches became redeployed, in the new contexts that emerged with developments in the field such as its growing professionalization and the formulation of new methodologies or the discovery of new finds.

In the course of the nineteenth century, Germany emerged as the leading centre of classical scholarship in Europe. In his 'Aspekte der Antike-Rezeption in der deutschen Altertumswissenschaft des 19. Jahrhunderts', K. Christ called attention to three key aspects of the German engagement with Greek antiquity during this period. First, the idealization of antiquity.⁷⁷ In this respect, J.J. Winckelmann

⁷² Dupuis III (1795), pp. 1ff., C. Dupuis, *Origine de Tous les Cultes, ou Religion Universelle*, vol. V (Paris: Agasse, 1795), pp. 109ff., Manuel (1959), p. 267. Similar views would be advanced to the 1920s: Sarasin argued, for example, 'Daß die christliche Religion, so wie alle anderen antiken Religionen, nur ein Seitensproß der allgemeinen Sonnenreligion, dieser Urmutter aller theistischen Religionen ist, geht aus der vergleichenden Religionsgeschichte mit Sicherheit hervor'. Sarasin postulated a universal solar *Urmonotheismus*: 'Am Anfang war die Sonne einziger Gott, eine Monas der Religion.' P. Sarasin, *Helios und Keraunos oder Gott und Geist* (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1924), pp. 181, 3.

⁷³ Dupuis III (1795), p. 27.

⁷⁴ Dupuis III (1795), p. 27.

⁷⁵ Manuel (1959), p. 270.

⁷⁶ Chr. Petersen, 'Religion oder Mythologie, Theologie und Gottesverehrung der Griechen', in J.S. Ersch and J.G. Gruber (eds.), *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste*, vol. 82 (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1864), pp. 1–380 at p. 45.

⁷⁷ K. Christ, 'Aspekte der Antike-Rezeption in der deutschen Altertumswissenschaft des 19. Jahrhunderts', in K. Christ and A. Momigliano (eds.), *L'Antichità*

(1717–68) played a catalytic role.⁷⁸ In his *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (1755) Winckelmann extolled the beauty of Greek statuary. In what would become some of the most famous words in the history of Greek art criticism, he maintained that ‘eine edle Einfalt, und eine stille Grösse’ distinguished the Greek masterpieces. These he also regarded as characteristic of the best of Greek literature.⁷⁹ In what Howald has described as ‘a scream for rescue and salvation for the senses offended by Baroque art’ Winckelmann asserted that ‘the only way for us to become great, indeed if possible, inimitable, is the imitation of the Ancients’.⁸⁰ The views of Winckelmann conduced to the supersession of the earlier fascination with Rome and laid the foundation-stones for an idealizing cult of Greece which would play a dominant role in German culture for at least half a century.⁸¹ Towering figures of German literature such as Goethe or Schiller partook in the celebration of Greece as a culture of beauty and harmony. Schiller’s poem *Die Götter Griechenlands* (1788, 1803) provides an example of this idealizing tendency. Schiller drew a contrast between life in Greek antiquity under the reign of the Olympian gods and life in the present under Christianity. A world of beauty, art, harmony with nature and proximity to the gods was juxtaposed to the greyness of modern life in which a mechanistic ‘soulless’ worldview had

nell’ Ottocento in Italia e Germania/Die Antike im 19. Jahrhundert in Italien und Deutschland (Berlin/Bologna: Duncker and Humblot, 1988), pp. 21–37 at pp. 22–7. Cf. Ch. 1 ‘The Making of a Cultural Obsession’, in S.L. Marchand, *Down from Olympus. Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 3–35, J. Wohleben, ‘Beobachtungen über eine Nicht-Begegnung: Welcker und Goethe’, in W.M. Calder III, A. Köhnken, W. Kullmann, and G. Pflug (eds.), *Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker. Werk und Wirkung* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1986), pp. 3–34 at pp. 17–20.

⁷⁸ Christ (1988), p. 22, L. Uhlig (ed.), *Griechenland als Ideal. Winckelmann und seine Rezeption in Deutschland* (Tübingen: Narr, 1988), p. 7, Marchand (1996), pp. 7–12. For a recent examination of the role of Winckelmann see further K. Harloe, *Winckelmann and the Invention of Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁷⁹ J.J. Winckelmann, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (1755), *Auszüg.*, in Uhlig (1988), pp. 22–38 at pp. 36, 38.

⁸⁰ E. Howald, *Wilhelm von Humboldt* (Zürich: Rentsch, 1944), p. 47. Winckelmann (1755) in Uhlig (1988), p. 23.

⁸¹ See the introduction and collection of texts in Uhlig (1988).

resulted in alienation from nature and in which the Christian God appeared too distant.⁸²

A close friend of Schiller, W. von Humboldt (1776–1835) played an instrumental part in the institutionalization of the idealization of Greece in Germany.⁸³ In his writings W. von Humboldt expressed frustration at the pressure of the hustle and bustle of modern life which prevented man from fully developing his potentialities.⁸⁴ Knowledge of Greek antiquity, he stressed, is ‘to us not only pleasant, useful and necessary, only in it we find the ideal of what we ourselves want to be and create’.⁸⁵ In his eyes, the Greeks exemplified how in a state of *edle Müßigkeit* human potentialities could be developed in fullness and harmony. The Greeks had attained ‘the blossom of imagination, the profundity of the spirit, the strength of the will, the unity of the whole being, which alone give man true value’.⁸⁶ Like Schiller, W. von Humboldt was further an ardent believer in the affinity between the Greeks and the Germans. This he located at several levels, from language and intellectual predispositions to political particularism and similarities in historical circumstances, the occupation of German territories by Napoleonic France evoking the Roman conquest of Greece.⁸⁷ The view that a special relationship existed between Greece and Germany was both founded on and encouraged the projection of alleged German qualities onto the

⁸² H. Hatfield, *Aesthetic Paganism in German Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 122–3. Cf. Henrichs (1987), p. 6. In terms of the themes of frustration at the alienation from nature and nostalgia for pagan antiquity, one may compare in England Wordsworth’s ‘The world is too much with us’: R. Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), pp. 176–7.

⁸³ Marchand (1996), pp. xvii, 24–31.

⁸⁴ W. von Humboldt, ‘Geschichte des Verfalls und Unterganges der griechischen Freistaaten’ (1807), in A. Flitner and K. Giel (eds.), *Wilhelm von Humboldt. Werke in fünf Bänden*, vol. II (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2010), pp. 73–124 at p. 93.

⁸⁵ Humboldt (1807) in Flitner/Giel (2010), p. 92. Cf. R. Pfeiffer, ‘Wilhelm von Humboldt, der Humanist’, *Ausgewählte Schriften* (Munich: Beck, 1960), pp. 256–68 at p. 261.

⁸⁶ W. von Humboldt, ‘Ideen zu einem Versuch, die Gränzen der Wirksamkeit des Staats zu bestimmen’ (1792), in A. Flitner and K. Giel (eds.), *Wilhelm von Humboldt. Werke in fünf Bänden*, vol. I (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2010), pp. 56–233 at p. 62.

⁸⁷ P.R. Sweet, *Wilhelm von Humboldt. A Biography*, vol. I (Columbus: Ohio State University press, 1978), pp. 279–80. Niebuhr famously stated that Greece was the Germany of antiquity: W. Herbst, *Das classische Alterthum in der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1852), p. 149.

Greeks. In the course of the nineteenth century, it appeared to acquire 'scientific' backing with the formulation of the Indo-European hypothesis.⁸⁸

As Prussian minister for education (1809–10), W. von Humboldt envisaged an educational programme at the heart of which would be the study of classical antiquity,⁸⁹ and that would help 'to mentally prepare the uprising against Napoleon'.⁹⁰ Key elements of W. von Humboldt's educational reforms were the organization of the *humanistische Gymnasium* and the foundation of the University of Berlin in 1810. Through these reforms, his idealized vision of Greece was built into the German educational system.⁹¹ This is not to say that no objections were raised against the idealization of Greece. No less a figure than A. Böckh (1785–1867), for example, raised the question 'should the student of antiquity conceal that even then, just as now, everything under the sun was imperfect?' In his view, 'the Hellenes were amidst the shine of art and the blossom of freedom unhappier than most think; they carried the seed of downfall in themselves'.⁹²

In part under German influence a tendency to idealize Greece is likewise observable in nineteenth-century Britain.⁹³ Its most famous representative was Matthew Arnold (1822–88). In his writings, Arnold mounted an attack against what he perceived as the philistinism and commercialism of contemporary English culture which attached little importance to spiritual values and stifled genuine artistic expression.⁹⁴ Like W. von Humboldt, he looked up to the Greeks as representing an ideal which could provide inspiration for the reinvigoration of contemporary cultural and social mores.⁹⁵ A classic statement of his belief in the power of the Greek example

⁸⁸ Cf. W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution. Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 2.

⁸⁹ Sweet (1978), p. 285.

⁹⁰ Pfeiffer (1960), p. 261.

⁹¹ Marchand (1996), p. 25.

⁹² A. Böckh, *Die Staatshaushaltung der Athener* (Berlin, 1851, second edition), pp. 2, 710ff. quoted in K. Christ, *Hellas. Griechische Geschichte und deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft* (Munich: Beck, 1999), p. 16.

⁹³ F.M. Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 41–3, Jenkins (1980), pp. 13–20.

⁹⁴ Turner (1981), pp. 17–36.

⁹⁵ F.M. Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority. Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 350–1, S. Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 213–31.

to help remedy the predicament of Victorian culture appears in the 1854 preface to his poems. There he argued that classical Athenian literature 'can help to cure us of what is, it seems to me, the great vice of our intellect, manifesting itself in our incredible vagaries in literature, in art, in religion, in morals; namely that it is *fantastic*, and wants *sanity*. Sanity,—that is the great virtue of the ancient literature; the want of that is the great defect of the modern.'⁹⁶ The stereotype of Greek 'sanity' would prove highly influential in English classical scholarship at least down to the turn of the century.⁹⁷

The idealization that informed the portrayal of Greek culture was also reflected in the treatment of Greek religion. Scholars tended to extend the majesty and tranquillity, which they praised, for example, in the representation of the Greek gods in the plastic arts, to Greek religion as a whole. As will be seen, a range of tactics were employed to cope with aspects that ill-cohered with the idealized view of the Greeks like the polytheism of Greek religion or the 'immorality' of Greek myths. Archaeology and anthropology would play a key role in the corrosion of the idealized view of Greek religion from the late nineteenth century onwards.⁹⁸

Especially since the appearance of Bernal's *Black Athena* (1987) the question of racism in nineteenth-century historiography has attracted attention.⁹⁹ In the case of some classical scholars, the other side to the idealization of Greece could be a racially charged depreciation of Near Eastern peoples such as the Semitic Phoenicians or the Egyptians

⁹⁶ Quoted in Turner (1981), p. 22.

⁹⁷ On German influences on Arnold's view of Greece see Turner (1981), p. 23.

⁹⁸ On the interest in archaeology and anthropology in Victorian Britain and its impact on perceptions of Greece see Turner (1981), pp. 115–34. On the role of archaeology see Marchand (1996), p. xx, A. Aurnhammer and T. Pittrof, 'Einleitung', in A. Aurnhammer and T. Pittrof (eds.), »*Mehr Dionysos als Apoll*«, *Antiklassizistische Antike-Rezeption um 1900* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2002), pp. 1–17 at p. 8.

⁹⁹ M. Bernal, *Black Athena. The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization. Volume 1: The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785–1985* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987). Bernal's book caused reaction in M.R. Lefkowitz and G. MacLean Rogers (eds.), *Black Athena Revisited* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) and response in D.C. Moore (ed.), *Black Athena Writes Back: Martin Bernal Responds to his Critics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001). On the controversy see further J. Berlinerblau, *Heresy in the University* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1999), G.W. Most, 'Philhellenism, Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism', in M. Haagsma, P. den Boer, E.M. Moormann, and H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg (eds.), *The Impact of Classical Greece on European and National Identities* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 2003), pp. 71–91 at pp. 72–3, S. Marchand and A. Grafton, 'Martin Bernal and his critics', *Arion* 3rd series 5.2, 1997, pp. 1–35.

who, for earlier generations of scholars, had been the ultimate founders of Greek civilization. As will be seen, contrasts between e.g. Greek manliness versus 'Oriental' effeminacy or Greek reason versus 'Oriental' mysticism recurred among certain strands of German classical scholarship throughout the nineteenth century and later.¹⁰⁰ This could not but affect how the question of foreign influences on Greek religion was treated in the period after the romantic fascination with the 'Orient' as the cradle of civilization waned.¹⁰¹ The argument that a people like the Greeks could not have been indebted to 'inferior' peoples like the Phoenicians or the Egyptians for such an essential part of their culture as religion was certainly one that was openly advanced by some classical scholars. At the same time, it should be noted that it was neither the sole argument urged for the Greek origins of Greek religion nor was it strong enough to stifle the discussion of foreign influences.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Cf. G.S. Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany. Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 139–40. The presence of a negative, oppositional strand in nineteenth-century German discourse on the 'Orient' should not obscure the 'richness and complexity of Europeans' relation with the Orient': S.L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire. Religion, Race, Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. xxii. On different views of the 'Orient' in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Germany see *ibid.* The notion of a contrast between 'masculine' Greek religion and 'feminine' Asian religions (to which he included Christianity) would be emphatically upheld in the first half of the twentieth century by W.F. Otto: O. Leege, 'Religionswissenschaft, Religionsgeschichte und die moderne Kultur bei Herman Usener und Walter F. Otto', in M. Espagne and P. Rabault-Ferhahn (eds.), *Hermann Usener und die Metamorphosen der Philologie* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2011), pp. 235–52 at p. 244.

¹⁰¹ On the treatment of the relation between Greece and the Eastern world and attempts to 'isolate' the Greeks from foreign influences see further B. Vick, 'Greek Origins and Organic Metaphors: Ideals of Cultural Autonomy in Neohumanist Germany from Winckelmann to Curtius', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 63 (3), 2002, pp. 483–500, Burkert (1992), pp. 1–3 who points to several conducive factors including anti-Semitic tendencies, G.W. Most, 'Philhellenism, Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism', in G. Klaniczay, M. Werner and O. Gecser (eds.), *Multiple Antiquities-Multiple Modernities. Ancient Histories in Nineteenth Century European Cultures* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 2011), pp. 29–47 at pp. 40–1. Cf. E. Flaig, 'Towards "Rassenhygiene": Wilamowitz and the German New Right', in I. Gildenhard and M.A. Ruehl (eds.), *Out of Arcadia. Classics and Politics in Germany in the Age of Burckhardt, Nietzsche and Wilamowitz* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2003), pp. 105–27 at p. 106. For a recent examination of the question of Eastern influences on Greek culture see Burkert (1992) and M.L. West, *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford/New York: Clarendon Press, 1997).

¹⁰² See Vick (2002).

Christ has further pointed to the *Verwissenschaftlichung der Antike* in the course of the nineteenth century.¹⁰³ The period saw the increasing processes of disciplinization, institutionalization, and professionalization of the field in Germany, which laid the foundations for the modern academic study of antiquity.¹⁰⁴ Largely the province of amateur men of letters, or theological writers, in the past and studied, as we saw, in the context of broader accounts of the religions of the ancient world, Greek religion started to increasingly attract the attention of professional classical scholars. C.G. Heyne (1729–1812), widely regarded as the founder of the modern study of ancient mythology in Germany,¹⁰⁵ had already treated *Mythologie* as part of *Realphilologie*.¹⁰⁶ In the course of the nineteenth century, Greek religion developed into an autonomous area of academic study in the context of a comprehensive *Altertumswissenschaft* as classically formulated by F.A. Wolf.¹⁰⁷ Wolf is credited with having played a

¹⁰³ Christ (1988), pp. 27–31. Cf. S.L. Marchand, 'Professionalization of Classics', in A. Grafton, G.W. Most, and S. Settis (eds.), *The Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2010), pp. 779–82.

¹⁰⁴ G.W. Most, 'Preface', in G.W. Most (ed.), *Disciplining Classics* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2002), pp. vii–xi at p. viii, G.W. Most, 'One Hundred Years of Fractiousness: Disciplining Polemics in Nineteenth-Century German Classical Scholarship', *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 127, 1997, pp. 349–61 at p. 349. On the growing specialization of classical studies in nineteenth-century Germany and the tensions with the ideal of a universal *Bildung* see further A.J. La Vopa, 'Specialists against Specialization: Hellenism as Professional Ideology in German Classical Studies', in G. Cocks and K.H. Jarausch (eds.), *German Professions, 1800–1950* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 27–45.

¹⁰⁵ According to K.O. Müller, Heyne was the scholar who 'das Studium auf jeden Fall neu angeregt, und wohl auch am meisten auf dasselbe gewirkt hat' K.O. Müller, *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1825), p. 317. On Heyne's views on myth see M. Heidenreich, *Christian Gottlob Heyne und die Alte Geschichte* (Leipzig: Saur, 2006), pp. 429–70, Graf (1993), pp. 9–11, M. Vöhler, 'Christian Gottlob Heyne und das Studium des Altertums in Deutschland', in Most (2002), pp. 39–54 at p. 47. It should be noted that Heyne was also interested in rituals, as, for example, in 'Vita antiquioris Graeciae ex ferorum et barbarorum populorum comparatione illustrata', *Opuscula Academica Collecta*, vol. III (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1788), pp. 17–30. On Heyne's conception of Greek religion see Heidenreich (2006), pp. 429–70, Henrichs (1987), p. 19, S. Fornaro, 'Homer in der deutschen und französischen Aufklärung', in V. Elm, G. Lottes, and V. de Senarclens (eds.), *Die Antike der Moderne* (Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2009), pp. 229–42 at pp. 231–4.

¹⁰⁶ L. Preller, 'Mythologie', in A. Pauly's *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 5 (Stuttgart: 1848a), pp. 336–71 at p. 353.

¹⁰⁷ For Wolf, *Mythologie* alongside such fields as geography or political history belonged to the *Haupttheile der Alterthumswissenschaft*: Bursian (1883), p. 522. On Wolf's conception of *Alterthumswissenschaft* see A. Horstmann, 'Die "Klassische

decisive role in the emergence of classical studies as a discipline independent of theology.¹⁰⁸ With his famous matriculation as *studio-sus philologiae* at Göttingen in 1777, philology is said to have ‘broke[n] free of theology’.¹⁰⁹ It should be emphasized, however, that several nineteenth-century German classical philologists came from families of pastors, and that German scholarship of Greek religion during this period was dominated by classical scholars who had studied theology in addition to classical philology.¹¹⁰ Christian faith and religious education could even be seen as prerequisites for a proper appreciation of Greek religion.¹¹¹ The Christian and Christianizing lenses of scholars are a crucial factor in the history of the study of Greek religion affecting its interpretation in diverse ways to the present day.

The term usually employed in German scholarship of the period to refer to Greek religion was *Mythologie*¹¹² under which both mythic and cultic aspects could be treated. As we shall see, in some cases the term *Mythologie* was used in contradistinction to *Religion* with scholars dismissing as ‘inane mythology’ stories about the gods which did not conform to their own conception of true religion.¹¹³ However, *Mythologie* and *Religion* could also be used interchangeably in reference to the religion of the ancient Greeks. As regards works

Philologie” zwischen Humanismus und Historismus. Friedrich August Wolf und die Begründung der modernen Altertumswissenschaft’, *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 1, 1978, pp. 51–70.

¹⁰⁸ Bursian (1883), pp. 517–19. Cf. La Vopa (1990), p. 31. For a revision of Wolf’s role in the history of classical scholarship see Harloe (2013), pp. 193ff.

¹⁰⁹ Burkert (1992), p. 2, W. Burkert, *Klassisches Altertum und Antikes Christentum. Probleme einer übergreifenden Religionswissenschaft* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996), p. 16.

¹¹⁰ On the history of the relationship between theology, classical philology, and the study of religions see the discussion in Burkert (1996) which draws attention to tensions as well as links.

¹¹¹ ‘wer den Mythos und die Religion der Griechen wie ihr sittliches Leben überhaupt richtig anschauen will—nicht in ihrer Einzelheit, sondern in ihrer wirklichen geschichtlichen Stellung—muss christlichen Glauben und religiöse Bildung besitzen’ Herbst (1852), p. 188.

¹¹² A. Henrichs, ‘Welckers Götterlehre’, in Calder (1986), pp. 179–229 at p. 187. Cf. H.S. Versnel, ‘What’s Sauce for the Goose Is Sauce for the Gander: Myth and Ritual, Old and New’, in L. Edmunds (ed.), *Approaches to Greek Myth* (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990a), pp. 25–90 at p. 26.

¹¹³ On the distinction between religion and mythology see Henrichs (1987), p. 17.

focusing on the religious practices of the Greeks, these tended to have such titles as *religiöse* or *gottesdienstliche Alterthümer*.¹¹⁴

In addition to the scientification of the study of antiquity, religion itself increasingly became in the nineteenth century an object of scientific enquiry.¹¹⁵ In this context of both strong theological influences and of progressive disciplinization and scientification, and also under the influence of developments in neighbouring disciplines such as linguistics or of advancements in the natural sciences, nineteenth-century classical scholars engaged in intense debates over which methodological approach could lead to the ever elusive 'scientific' treatment of Greek religion—from the *Kampf* between the 'romantic' Creuzer and his rationalist critics to the confrontation between Indo-European Comparative Mythology and anthropology later in the century.¹¹⁶ At the same time we should note the presence of another line of thought in nineteenth-century scholarship on Greek religion according to which, religion could not sufficiently be understood through the adoption of a scientific approach alone. In the twentieth century, this view would be emphatically represented by W.F. Otto (1874–1958).

One consequence of the use of methodological principles inspired by the natural sciences was the reinforcement of the importance of

¹¹⁴ Petersen (1864), p. 2. K.F. Hermann's *Lehrbuch der gottesdienstlichen Alterthümer der Griechen* (Heidelberg: Mohr, 1846) and G.F. Schömann's *Griechische Alterthümer*, vol. II (Berlin: Weidmann, 1859) are two examples. For works on Greek religious practices and especially sacrifice during the first half of the nineteenth century see Petersen (1864), p. 191.

¹¹⁵ On the emergence of the 'scientific' study of religion see H.G. Kippenberg, *Discovering Religious History in the Modern Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), M. Wheeler-Barclay, *The Science of Religion in Britain, 1860–1915* (Charlottesville/London: University of Virginia Press, 2010), A.L. Molendijk and P. Pels (eds.), *Religion in the Making. The Emergence of the Sciences of Religion* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 1998).

¹¹⁶ Cf. J.H. Blok, 'Quests for a Scientific Mythology: F. Creuzer and K.O. Müller on History and Myth', *History and Theory* 33 (4), 1994, pp. 26–52, Most (1997), pp. 351–2, Detienne (1986), O. Murray, 'In Search of the Key to All Mythologies', in S. Rebenich, B. von Reibnitz, and Th. Späth (eds.), *Translating Antiquity* (Basel: Schwabe, 2010), pp. 119–29. On the relation between classical scholarship and science in nineteenth-century Germany see also I. Gildenhard, 'Philologia Perennis? Classical Scholarship and Functional Differentiation', in Gildenhard/Ruehl (2003), pp. 161–203 at p. 194, n. 106 and C. Robert Phillips III, 'Approaching Roman Religion: the Case for Wissenschaftsgeschichte', in J. Rüpke (ed.), *A Companion to Roman Religion* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 10–28 at p. 11. On the unattainability of a 'scientific' study of mythology see Burkert (1980), p. 159, Murray (2010), pp. 127–8.

the search for origins. Under the influence of the premise that to fully explain a natural phenomenon one had to account for its origins, classical scholars attempted with renewed vigour to discover the origins of Greek religion.¹¹⁷ The notion that principles deriving from the natural sciences could and should be applied to the study of Greek religion would be subjected to heavy criticism by Farnell at the turn of the century. In the late 1960s, C.J. Herington still argued against it.¹¹⁸

In addition, attention should be given to the encounter of the study of Greek religion with the emerging science of geography. In his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784–91), J.G. Herder (1744–1803) argued that each people tended to develop their own distinct culture in relation to their geographic and climatic conditions. In his eyes, an intimate bond existed between *Völker* and *Land*.¹¹⁹ As will be seen, his views provided the basis for the defence of the national autonomy of Greek culture against older theories postulating foreign origins—although Herder himself suggested that, owing to its geography, Greece had been susceptible to cultural influences from abroad.¹²⁰ In the wake of Herder, Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) and Karl Ritter (1779–1859), the founders of modern scientific geography in Germany, placed emphasis on exploring the connections between humans and their geographical environment.¹²¹ In the course of the nineteenth century, Greece became increasingly accessible to German classical scholars after the foundation of an independent Greek state and the ascension to the Greek throne of Otto, son of king Ludwig of Bavaria.¹²² Under the influence of the views of Humboldt and Ritter,¹²³ German classical scholars sought to investigate the importance of geography for the civilization of ancient Greece from the fields of politics and economy to art and

¹¹⁷ C.J. Herington, Review of L. Séchan and P. Lévêque, *Les Grandes Divinités de la Grèce*, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 89, 1969, pp. 168–70 at p. 170.

¹¹⁸ Herington (1969), p. 170.

¹¹⁹ G. Schmidt (ed.), *J.G. Herder, Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Wiesbaden: Fourier, 1985), p. 331, Manuel (1959), pp. 291ff.

¹²⁰ Schmidt (1985), p. 330, Feldman/Richardson (1972), pp. 233–4, Burkert (1992), pp. 1–3, Vick (2002), p. 485.

¹²¹ W.D. Smith, *Politics and the Sciences of Culture in Germany 1840–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 57–9, H.-J. Gehrke, *Auf der Suche nach dem Land der Griechen* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2003), pp. 7–11.

¹²² Gehrke (2003), p. 7.

¹²³ Bursian (1883), pp. 1127ff.

religion.¹²⁴ As we shall see, scholars who visited Greece and became familiarized with its geography drew on their insights to advance very different interpretations of Greek religion.

To turn to Britain, as Turner notes, 'professional Victorian classical scholars regarded their chief task as the establishment of Greek and Latin texts, with the writing of interpretive studies or essays very much a secondary task in their view.'¹²⁵ Some of the most famous nineteenth-century British writers on Greek religion like Gladstone, for example, were not professional scholars.¹²⁶ Like their professional colleagues, amateur investigators sought to make use of new tools and methodologies in order to provide 'scientific' answers to contemporary questions, and, despite tensions between amateur and professional students of Greek religion, the former could exercise significant influence on academic scholarship.¹²⁷

Christ further underlined the processes of the *Politisierung* or *Aktualisierung* as a characteristic of the German encounter with antiquity in the course of the nineteenth century. In this context, he laid particular stress on how the study of the political history of the ancient world was informed by contemporary political agendas.¹²⁸ As we have seen, the interest in Greek religion in modern times had a long history of being intertwined with contemporary religious concerns. In nineteenth-century Germany, when the study of Greek religion was dominated by theologically trained classical scholars, it would eminently continue to do so. Turner observed with respect to Victorian students of Greek religion—and the same applies to their German colleagues—that 'they recognized that what they said about the Greek myths and religious experience might bear directly on Christianity'.¹²⁹ In this context, attention should be given especially to two aspects of the theological background of the period. First, the

¹²⁴ O. Jahn, 'Bedeutung und Stellung der Alterthumstudien in Deutschland', *Aus der Alterthumswissenschaft. Populäre Aufsätze* (Bonn: Marcus, 1868), pp. 1–50 at p. 36. On the role of landscape in nineteenth-century historiography see P. Matalas, 'Historiens et Voyageurs: Itinéraires Modernes aux Sites de l'Histoire Ancienne', in Avlami (2010), pp. 105–32.

¹²⁵ Turner (1993), p. 286.

¹²⁶ On the progression from amateur to academic classical scholarship in nineteenth-century Britain see Stray (1998), pp. 117ff. Goldhill warns against viewing the professionalization of classical scholarship as a 'neat teleological story': Goldhill (2002), p. 194.

¹²⁷ As will be seen in the case of Lang. Cf. Wheeler-Barclay (2010), p. 111.

¹²⁸ Christ (1988), pp. 31–7. ¹²⁹ Turner (1981), p. 83.

challenge posed to Christianity and religion more broadly by the propagation of scientific materialism.¹³⁰ The formulation of scientific laws which accounted for the working of the world in terms of a 'mechanical' relationship of cause and effect seemed to make the notion of God redundant and to dispense with free will. Darwinism played a key role in this respect: the theory of evolution provided a 'definitive' scientific alternative to the Christian account of the creation of the world and of humankind.¹³¹ For the followers of Darwin, the laws of evolution governed the development of humans like that of other animals without reference to a Creator God and without assuming a divine end for human history. Moreover, as Symonds stated in 1890: 'In another very important point Evolution has reacted destructively on popular Christianity. By penetrating our minds with the conviction that all things are in process, that the whole universe is literally in perpetual *Becoming*, it has rendered it impossible for us to believe that any one creed or set of opinions possesses finality.'¹³² Strauss poignantly expressed the views of the modern 'scientific' man in *Der alte und der neue Glaube*. (1872): 'if we wish to speak sincerely and honestly, we must confess: we are not Christians any more.' He emphasized that 'to us man is not created from the hand of God, but ascended from the depths of nature. His first state was not paradisaical, but much more almost animal like.'¹³³ Studies on the religions of antiquity in general and on Greek religion in particular provided one of the arenas in which the battles between exponents of scientific materialism and the devout were fought out.

The second aspect that should be taken into consideration concerns Catholic and Protestant rivalry. A series of developments in the course of the century conduced to the exacerbation of tensions. The

¹³⁰ See the discussion in H. Mcleod, *Secularisation in Western Europe, 1848–1914* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), p. 5, P. Byrne, 'The Foundations of the Study of Religion in the British Context', in Molendijk/Pels (1998), pp. 45–65 at p. 53, Wheeler-Barclay (2010), p. 3.

¹³¹ T. Nipperdey, *Religion im Umbruch. Deutschland 1870–1918* (Munich: Beck, 1988), p. 126, Turner (1993), pp. 56ff. Cf. R.M. Young, 'The Impact of Darwin on Conventional Thought', in A. Symondson (ed.), *The Victorian Crisis of Faith* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1970), pp. 13–35.

¹³² J.A. Symonds, 'The Philosophy of Evolution', *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*, vol. I (London: Chapman and Hall, 1890), pp. 1–41 at p. 7.

¹³³ D.F. Strauss, *Der alte und der neue Glaube. Ein Bekenntnis* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1872), pp. 90, 225, cf. Nipperdey (1988), p. 125.

apparent Catholic revival in the early years of the nineteenth century, especially among romantic circles, met with Protestant unease. Catholic thinkers of the period like J. de Maistre (1753–1821) or H.-F. de Lamennais (1782–1854) argued that truth in questions of religion depended exclusively on revelation, according no role to human reason.¹³⁴ In addition, several actions taken by the Vatican such as the dogmatization of the immaculate conception in 1854, the publication of the *Syllabus Errorum* in 1864, which included rationalism in the list of modern evils, and the dogma of papal infallibility in 1870,¹³⁵ highlighted, from a Protestant standpoint, the anti-modern, authoritarian character of contemporary Catholicism. In Germany, tensions culminated in the 1870s in the *Kulturkampf* between the Prussian state and the Catholic Church.

After the discrediting of ‘romantic Catholic’ interpretations of Greek religion in the early nineteenth century, the study of Greek religion in nineteenth-century Germany was dominated by scholars with a Protestant background.¹³⁶ As we shall see, from J.H. Voss (1751–1826) to Usener (1834–1905), criticism of Catholicism informed German Protestant writings on Greek religion. The predominantly Christian Protestant conception of religion in German scholarship affected the portrayal of Greek religion in several ways from the importance attached to faith to the stress on a genuinely moral core in Greek religion beyond the ‘immorality’ of Greek myths.¹³⁷

In addition, attention should be given to the place that the idea of God had in contemporary understandings of religion. In his *Ueber die Religion* (1799), the leading romantic theologian F. Schleiermacher (1768–1834) questioned the absolute importance of God for religion.¹³⁸ For scholars of Greek religion, however, like Welcker or

¹³⁴ B.M.G. Reardon, *Religion in the Age of Romanticism. Studies in Early Nineteenth Century Thought* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 117.

¹³⁵ Nipperdey (1988), p. 9.

¹³⁶ On the Christian Protestant outlook of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German scholars of Greek religion see R. Schlesier, ‘Die Leiden des Dionysos’, in A. Knepe and D. Metzler (eds.), *Die emotionale Dimension antiker Religiosität* (Münster: Ugarit, 2003), pp. 1–20 at pp. 1–3. On the broader marginalization of Catholic scholars in Germany during the period see Marchand (1996), p. xxiii.

¹³⁷ On the German Protestant scholars’ emphasis on faith see Henrichs (1987), p. 13, Schlesier (2003), pp. 2–3.

¹³⁸ ‘In der Religion also steht die Idee von Gott nicht so hoch als Ihr meint’, ‘Gott ist nicht Alles in der Religion sondern Eins, und das Universum ist mehr’.

Curtius, religion was intertwined with the idea of God. This accounts, in part, for the emphasis they gave to the gods in their studies of Greek religion. By contrast, in the beginning of the twentieth century, Harrison would argue under the influence of Durkheimian sociology that god(s) were not a fundamental aspect of religion. As Momigliano emphasizes, a major challenge facing religious historiography in the nineteenth century (and indeed to the present) concerned the relation between the study of specific religions and modern theories on the nature of religion.¹³⁹ As we shall see, the debates among advocates of physical interpretations, of the historical-critical approach and anthropology, or between Usener and Wilamowitz, over the interpretation of Greek religion all went back to broader disagreements over the nature of religion.

In some strands of nineteenth-century literature and thought Greek religion and Greek culture as a whole could be presented as antagonistic to Christianity.¹⁴⁰ The overwhelming tendency of the German scholars under investigation, however, was not to use Greek religion as a means to attack Christianity (at least not Protestant Christianity); rather they tended to stress the parallels between the religion of the ancient Greeks and their own Christian religion in line with their conviction that Greek antiquity and Christianity were the twin fountain sources of modern German culture.¹⁴¹ In their work Greek religion could at times appear as a precursor of Christianity.¹⁴² In this respect scholarly accounts of Greek religion provided a parallel

F.D.E. Schleiermacher, *Ueber die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (1799), (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1999), pp. 245, 247. Cf. Kippenberg (2002), p. 15.

¹³⁹ Momigliano (1987a), pp. 42–3. Momigliano refers to different examples from Creuzer to Tylor.

¹⁴⁰ M. Landfester, *Humanismus und Gesellschaft im 19. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), p. 44, Burkert (1996), pp. 17, 21, Burkert (2011), p. 12. On the ambivalent relation between Christianity and Greek antiquity in Victorian Britain see Jenkyns (1980), pp. 67–73.

¹⁴¹ Cf. La Vopa (1990), p. 40. On further attempts to ‘reconcile’ Greece and Christianity in nineteenth-century Germany see Landfester (1988), pp. 88–93. On comparable attempts in Britain: F.M. Turner, ‘Why the Greeks and not the Romans in Victorian Britain?’, in G.W. Clarke (ed.), *Rediscovering Hellenism. The Hellenic Inheritance and the English Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 61–81 at p. 76, Jenkyns (1980), p. 69. On the ‘alliance’ between Christianity and classical education in Victorian Britain see Goldhill (2002), p. 208.

¹⁴² Cf. Landfester (1988), p. 169.

to the portrayal of Greek religion and Christianity as related in contemporary literature.¹⁴³

Attempts to shed light on the similarities between Greek religion and Christianity and ultimately on the common ground between the Greek and the Christian world are likewise visible in Victorian scholarship, the most famous example being Gladstone.¹⁴⁴ This tendency, if to a diminishing extent, persisted well into the twentieth century. Thus in the preface to the last volume (1940) of his monumental study of Zeus A.B. Cook (1868–1952) stated that with his work he had wished to elucidate the role that the worship of Zeus played in the development of Greek religion ‘from primitive paganism towards complete Christianity’, ‘leading the minds of men upwards and onwards to ever greater heights till Zeus at his noblest joined hands with the Christian conception of Deity’.¹⁴⁵ If such approaches were widespread, they were not unopposed. In the early 1920s, for example, W.F. Otto, would deplore that even in his day liberal theology was attempting to portray ‘pagan’ religion as nothing but a precursor of Christianity.¹⁴⁶ Under the influence of Nietzsche, he emphatically argued that ‘paganism’ and Christianity were and would remain for ever irreconcilable enemies.¹⁴⁷

Contemporary theological concerns and confessional polemics played a major part in discussions of two issues that, as we mentioned,

¹⁴³ As, for example, in the case of Hölderlin: G. Hoffmeister, *Deutsche und europäische Romantik* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1978), p. 128.

¹⁴⁴ G. Joseph, ‘The Homeric Competitions of Tennyson and Gladstone’, in K.C. King (ed.), *Homer* (New York: Garland 1994), pp. 143–52 at pp. 146–8. Campbell who emphasized approaching Greek antiquity ‘not as hostile to Christianity nor as a rival to it, but as conspiring with it, in a lower grade, if you will’ offers a later British example: L. Campbell, *Religion in Greek literature. A Sketch in Outline* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1898), p. 377.

¹⁴⁵ A.B. Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion*, vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), pp. xii–xiii. Cf. H. Schwabl, ‘A.B. Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion* (1914/1925/1940): Nachdenkliches über Plan und Aussage des Werkes’, in Calder (1991), pp. 227–49 at pp. 237–8, K. Dowden, *Zeus* (London/New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 13. We may compare A.J. Festugière (1898–1982) who at the end of the revealingly entitled *L’Idéal Religieux des Grecs et l’Évangile* stated, ‘La Croix illumine l’obscur élan de l’âme grecque.’ A.J. Festugière, *L’Idéal Religieux des Grecs et l’Évangile* (Paris: Leclercq, 1932), p. 169. Cf. M. Despland, ‘Seven Decades of Writing on Greek Religion’, *Religion* 4, 1974, pp. 118–50 at p. 133.

¹⁴⁶ W.F. Otto, *Der Geist der Antike und die christliche Welt* (Bonn: Cohen, 1923), p. 124.

¹⁴⁷ Otto (1923), p. 124.

continued to dominate scholarship on Greek religion during the nineteenth century as they had done previously.

First, was monotheism or polytheism the original form of Greek religion? The question of Greek *Urmonotheismus* formed part of the broader question of whether humankind's original religion had been monotheistic which, as Schmidt stresses, remained 'the essential problem—the subject of debate throughout the nineteenth century'.¹⁴⁸ Philosophers, theologians, anthropologists, classical scholars as well as scholars of other religions of antiquity like the religions of the Egyptians or the Germanic peoples took part in this debate.¹⁴⁹ As in the eighteenth century, some thinkers favourably contrasted polytheism to monotheism.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, J. Grimm's view that of all forms monotheism was 'the most worthy of God and the most appropriate to reason' reflects a typical acknowledgment of the 'superiority' of monotheism in mainstream German classical scholarship.¹⁵¹ The negative connotations of the term 'polytheism' have had a long afterlife in classical scholarship in Germany and Britain. As Henrichs notes, the term has tended to be avoided in titles of

¹⁴⁸ Schmidt (1987), pp. 26–7. Cf. Henrichs (1986), p. 204.

¹⁴⁹ On monotheism and polytheism in nineteenth-century philosophy and theology see M. Leonard, *Socrates and the Jews. Hellenism and Hebraism from Moses Mendelssohn to Sigmund Freud* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2012). See also the discussion in Williamson (2004). On Grimm's postulation of *Urmonotheismus* in the religion of the ancient Germans see H. Seipp, *Entwicklungszüge der germanischen Religionswissenschaft* (Berlin: Ernst-Reuter-Gesellschaft, 1968), p. 20. On *Urmonotheismus* in the history of scholarship on Egyptian religion see E. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen. Ägyptische Gottesvorstellungen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), pp. 4–17, J. Assmann, *Monotheismus und Kosmotheismus: Ägyptische Formen eines 'Denkens Des Einen' und ihre europäische Rezeptionsgeschichte* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1993).

¹⁵⁰ E.g. Renan or Feuerbach: Leonard (2012), pp. 116, 144.

¹⁵¹ J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, vol. II (Berlin: Dümmler, 1877, fourth edition), p. xxxviii quoted in Seipp (1968), p. 20. On the tendency to view monotheism as the 'highest' religious form in the history of religious studies: Assmann (1993), p. 5. Lehrs' emphasis on the beauty of the pluralistic divine world of the Greeks came as a reaction to the tendency of his fellow classical scholars to extoll the alleged monotheism of the Greeks: K. Lehrs, *Populäre Aufsätze aus dem Alterthum* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1875, second edition), p. 150. On vindications of polytheism in nineteenth-century French scholarship see Avlami (2001). The notion of the 'moral superiority' of monotheism over polytheism remains widespread in modern times: S. Mitchell and P. van Nuffelen, 'Introduction: the Debate about Pagan Monotheism', in S. Mitchell and P. van Nuffelen (eds.), *One God. Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 1–15 at p. 1. Contemporary criticisms of monotheism are mentioned in P. van Nuffelen, 'Pagan Monotheism as a Religious Phenomenon', in Mitchell/van Nuffelen (2010), pp. 16–33 at p. 17.

studies of Greek religion to the present day.¹⁵² Classical scholars debated the question of Greek *Urmonotheismus* against the wider discussion on 'primitive' monotheism to the end of the nineteenth century and beyond. The widespread, but far from undisputed, view in the period that the Greeks had originally been monotheists does not reflect only a Christianocentric conception of religion. Theories of Greek *Urmonotheismus* could assume many different forms and were advanced by scholars on different grounds and with different agendas.¹⁵³ Was *Urmonotheismus* the gift of divine Revelation or was it innate? Was it diffused to Greece from abroad, and if so, where from? From Palestine, Egypt, or India? Was it part of the Indo-European heritage of the Greeks or of the common heritage of all humankind? These variations were of crucial importance. As will be seen, for some classical scholars demonstrating that even a 'pagan' religion like the Greek had monotheistic origins was part of an attempt to take a stance against the view propagated by advocates of scientific materialism that religion had been a product of faulty reasoning in the early stages of human history. With the rise of Indo-European Comparative Mythology during the second half of the nineteenth century, the question of Greek *Urmonotheismus* became

¹⁵² A. Henrichs, 'Götterdämmerung und Götterglanz: Griechischer Polytheismus seit 1872', in B. Seidensticker and M. Vöhler (eds.), *Urgeschichten der Moderne. Die Antike im 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Metzler 2001), pp. 1–19 at pp. 2–3, 6. Parker's *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (2005) broke with this long tradition of avoidance in Anglophone and German scholarship: A. Henrichs, 'What is a Greek God?', in Bremmer/Erskine (2010), pp. 19–39 at p. 24. More recently note R. Schlesier (ed.), *A Different God?: Dionysos and Ancient Polytheism* (Boston/Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011) and I. Polinskaya's *A Local History of Greek Polytheism: Gods, People and the Land of Aigina, 800–400 BCE* (Leiden: Brill, 2013). The term seems to have appeared more frequently in Francophone scholarship—for example in Th. Bernard's *Étude sur les Variations du Polythéisme Grec* (Paris: Franck, 1853) and *Histoire du Polythéisme Grec* (Paris: Franck, 1854), or L. Ménard's *Du Polythéisme Hellénique* (Paris: Charpentier, 1863); see C. Avlami, *L'Antiquité Grecque à la Française. Modes d'Appropriation de la Grèce au XIXe Siècle* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2001), pp. 425ff. Of particular interest is Ménard's association of polytheism with democratic forms of government: Avlami (2001), pp. 467, 474. In the twentieth century, note C. Picard's *Les Origines du Polythéisme Hellénique*, 2 vols. (Paris: Laurens, 1930–1932) and later G. François' *Le Polythéisme et l'Emploi au Singulier des Mots ΘΕΟΣ, ΔΑΙΜΩΝ* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1957). More recently: M. Detienne, *Apollon le Couteau à la Main: une Approche Expérimentale du Polythéisme Grec* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998).

¹⁵³ On different advocates of *Urmonotheismus* in the period see A. Wessels, *Ursprungszauber. Zur Rezeption von Hermann Useners Lehre von den religiösen Begriffsbildung* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), pp. 86–7.

intertwined with contemporary discourses on Indo-Europeans and Semites. Claiming that the original religion of the Indo-European Greeks had been monotheistic could appear in the context of polemical efforts to show that *Urmonotheismus* was not a privilege of the Semites denied to the Indo-Europeans, or in the context of conciliatory attempts aiming to bring closer the religions of the two families of peoples.

The second question hotly debated in the scholarship of the period concerned the origins and nature of the Greek gods. As we saw, theories developed in antiquity such as physical allegory or Euhemerism continued to play a major role in modern discussions of the ancient gods to the eighteenth century. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Euhemerism as a method of interpretation of the Greek gods had become outdated in German scholarship.¹⁵⁴ For a great part of the nineteenth century, scholars in both Germany and Britain were divided between those who held, on various grounds, that the origins of the Greek gods had been physical and that these remained important for the understanding of the Greek gods in historical times and those who took the view that the Greek gods had by origin been conceived as ethical rather than physical beings, or that they left the physical stage behind them very early. The debate was sometimes phrased in terms of whether Greek religion was a *Naturreligion* or an 'ethical religion' and whether the Greek gods were nature-gods or ethical or moral beings.¹⁵⁵ Not all scholars employed these terms in the same way, but Preller's definition of *Naturreligion* may serve to give an indication of the view of the author of one of the most widely read works on Greek religion of the time: 'The religions

¹⁵⁴ On the other hand, the Euhemerizing view that Greek myths contained historical information was upheld, for example, by K.O. Müller: *Graf* (1993), p. 23.

¹⁵⁵ Lehrs (1875), p. 261. Cf. 'Hiermit haben wir die Classification berührt, welche weitaus die grösste Bedeutung hat. Freilich wird sie auf sehr verschieden Arten durchgeführt. Der Gegensatz wird bestimmt entweder als natürlich und geistig, oder als natürlich und sittlich.' P.D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, vol. 1 (Freiburg/Leipzig: Mohr, 1897, second edition), p. 10. The distinction between nature religions and ethical religions continued to play an important part in the study of Greek religion at least down to the early twentieth century. Farnell argued against it in 1911: L.R. Farnell, *Greece and Babylon. A Comparative Sketch of Mesopotamian, Anatolian and Hellenic Religions* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1911), pp. 40–1. On the different uses of the term 'Naturreligion' in the history of the study of religions see 'Naturreligion. Zur Transformationsgeschichte eines Begriffs', in K.-H. Kohl, *Abwehr und Verlangen. Zur Geschichte der Ethnologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1987), pp. 103–22.

of antiquity are *Naturreligionen*, that is, in them divinity is construed not as something set above nature nor specifically separate from it; but rather as something immanent in nature, participating in every one of its transformations and infinitely diverse configurations, sometimes acting together, sometimes suffering together with it.¹⁵⁶

The use of the term *Naturgott* was also surrounded by ambiguities.¹⁵⁷ Some scholars used it to broadly designate the Greek gods as personifications of natural elements. For others, it designated specifically gods whose life and death reflected the cycle of nature and was imbued with orgiastic and mystic connotations. These ambiguities compounded the debate between supporters and opponents of elemental interpretations, which, as we shall see, formed part of wider disagreements on the nature of religion and involved different views on the relation between the worship of nature-deities and mysticism as well as on the relation between Greek religion and the religions of the ancient Near East.

For advocates of physical interpretations, Apollo tended to provide one of the clearest examples of the validity of their views. In their eyes, it was almost self-evident that Apollo had by origin been a sun-god. This made their critics devote considerable effort to demonstrating that Apollo's identification with the sun was, in fact, only a post-Homeric development. The controversy over the interpretation of Apollo should be seen in the light of the broader attraction that his figure exercised at the time.¹⁵⁸ At a first level, this went back to the admiration of the youthful beauty and manliness of Apollo's representation in the plastic arts which was seen as the epitome of the

¹⁵⁶ L. Preller, 'Das Zwölfgöttersystem der Griechen', *Verhandlungen der neunten Versammlung deutscher Philologen, Schulmänner und Orientalisten zu Jena* (Jena, 1846a), pp. 48–56 at p. 49.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. L.R. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896a), pp. 3–5.

¹⁵⁸ On the reception and history of the modern fascination with Apollo see A. Heissmeyer, *Apoll und der Apollonkult seit der Renaissance* (Tübingen, 1967), R. Mercier, *Le Retour d'Apollon* (Paris: La Colombe, 1963), F. Graf, *Apollo* (London/New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 145–77, T. Günther, 'Apollo', in Grafton (2010), pp. 54–5, U. van Loyen, 'Apollo', in M. Moog-Grünwald (ed.), *Brill's New Pauly, The Reception of Myth and Mythology*. Supplements, vol. 4 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010), pp. 105–21 and the entry on Apollo in J.D. Reid and C. Rohmann (eds.), *The Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology in the Arts, 1300–1990s*, vol. 1 (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 162–85.

Greek ideal of beauty.¹⁵⁹ At a further level, as the son and ‘prophet’ of Zeus, Apollo lent himself to Christian analogies and thus played an important role in the thesis of similarities between Greek religion and Christianity.¹⁶⁰ In addition, ‘Apolline’ qualities like serenity or moderation strongly appealed to the moral values of the time.¹⁶¹ The emphasis on Apollo and on ‘Apolline’ qualities during this period marked a break with the earlier fascination with the figure of Osiris-Bacchus in the writings of symbolist scholars and would trigger a reaction in later scholarship leading to the [re]vindication of Dionysiac mysticism in the writings of Nietzsche, Rohde and Harrison.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Winckelmann extolled especially Apollo Belvedere: Heissmeyer (1967), p. 4, A. Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal. Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 118, R. Reschke, ‘Die Erfindung eines Gottes aus dem Geist der Aufklärung. Johann Joachim Winckelmanns »Apollon im Belvedere«’, in Elm (2009), pp. 309–41. The reputation of the statue declined in the course of the nineteenth century: Potts (1994), p. 125, but see Graf (2009), p. 175. Towards the end of the century Farnell stated of the Belvedere Apollo: ‘It is true there are marks in it of a taste not wholly healthy; there is a slight strut in the gait, an affectation of high-bred elegance in the bearing’, but acknowledged its ‘vitality and the tense vigour of action impressed on the figure’: L.R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, vol. IV (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907a), p. 354. In the 1910s, Jane Harrison referred to Apollo Belvedere as a ‘product of late and accomplished, even decadent art’ J.E. Harrison, *Ancient Art and Ritual* (New York/London: Williams and Norgate, 1913), p. 183.

¹⁶⁰ As will be seen, this is a prominent theme in E. Curtius’ account of Apollo. M. Arnold’s Christianizing Apollo offers a British parallel: Jenkyns (1980), p. 203. On the history of Christianizing accounts of Apollo see van Loyen (2010), pp. 111–12, Graf (2009), p. 148. In contemporary literature, Apollo could be presented both in Christianizing terms and as an antipode to Christ, as, for example, by Swinburne: T.E. Morgan, ‘The Sun of Faith, the Shadow of Doubt: Language and Knowledge in Swinburne’s Myth of Apollo’, in J.B. Bullen (ed.), *The Sun is God: Painting, Literature and Mythology in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 125–58.

¹⁶¹ Cf. S. Arvidsson, *Aryan Idols: Indo-European Mythology as Ideology and Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 111.

¹⁶² On the history of the interpretation of Dionysos see M.L. Baeumer, *Dionysos und das Dionysische in der antiken und deutschen Literatur* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006), A. Henrichs, ‘Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence: The Modern View of Dionysus from Nietzsche to Girard’, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 88, 1984, pp. 205–40, A. Henrichs, ‘“He has God in Him”: Human and Divine in the Modern Perception of Dionysus’, in T.H. Carpenter and C.A. Faraone (eds.), *Masks of Dionysus* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 13–43, Schlesier (1998), R. Schlesier, ‘Dionysos als Ekstasegott’, in R. Schlesier and A. Schwarzmaier (eds.), *Dionysos: Verwandlung und Ekstase* (Regensburg: Schnell and Steiner, 2008), pp. 28–41, O. Leege, ‘Dionysos in der modernen Religionsgeschichte’, in Schlesier/Schwarzmaier (2008), pp. 132–41, Kippenberg (2002),

The disputes between J.H. Voss (1751–1826) and his former teacher at Göttingen, Heyne, and later with his colleague at Heidelberg, G.F. Creuzer, offer insights into the stakes involved in the question over the solar nature of Apollo and more broadly in the debate over the physical origins of the Greek gods which, as we mentioned, was to preoccupy scholars throughout the nineteenth century. In his *Mythologische Briefe* (1794), which contains several themes that would reappear in his later *Antisymbolik* (1824), Voss launched an attack against M.G. Hermann's *Handbuch der Mythologie* (1787, 1790), a book drawing on the lectures of Hermann's teacher, Heyne, who wrote the foreword.¹⁶³ At the centre of the debate were the origins of Greek religion—if Greek religion had been a genuinely Greek creation, or if it had been formatively influenced by the religions of 'un-Greek barbarian lands'¹⁶⁴—and with them its very character. Heyne argued for diverse foreign influences on Greek religion—and not only from a single source like Egypt as was more usual in his time.¹⁶⁵ Heyne's claim that the Greek gods had, like the gods of Eastern religions, originally had theriomorphic features such as horns or tails, or that they were androgynous conflicted with Voss' conception of Greek religion.¹⁶⁶ In his own writings Voss

pp. 100–5, M. Konaris, 'Dionysos in Nineteenth-Century Scholarship', in Schlesier (2011), pp. 467–78.

¹⁶³ Bursian (1883), pp. 559ff., M. Espagne, 'Voß, Wolf, Heyne und ihr Home-verständnis', in G. Toepfer and H. Böhme (eds.), *Transformationen antiker Wissenschaften* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2010b), pp. 141–55 at 144ff. Williamson (2004), pp. 61–2.

¹⁶⁴ J.H. Voss, *Antisymbolik*, vol. I (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1824), p. 22. G. Häntzschel, 'Johann Heinrich Voß in Heidelberg. Kontroversen und Mißverständnisse', in Strack (1987), pp. 301–21 at p. 311, S. Fornaro, 'Friedrich Creuzer und die Diskussion über Philologie und Mythologie zu Beginn des 19. Jhs.', in M. Korenjak and K. Töchterle (eds.), *Pontes I. Akten der ersten Innsbrucker Tagung zur Rezeption der klassischen Antike* (Innsbruck: Studien, 2001), pp. 28–42 at p. 38, Espagne (2010b), p. 146. On Voss' opposition to theories of Eastern origins see Williamson (2004), pp. 139–40 and J. Vanden Heuvel, *A German Life in the Age of Revolution. Joseph Görres, 1776–1848* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), p. 146. We should note, however, that Voss did not reject foreign influences on Greek religion altogether, but rather confined them to post-Homeric times: Gruppe (1921), p. 149.

¹⁶⁵ C.G. Heyne, 'De Theogonia ab Hesiodo Condita', *Commentationes Societatis Regiae Scientiarum Gottingensis*, vol. II (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1779), pp. 125–54 at p. 128. On Heyne's views on foreign influences in Greece see Heidenreich (2006), pp. 451–7.

¹⁶⁶ J.H. Voss, *Mythologische Briefe*, vol. I (Königsberg: Nicolovius, 1794), p. 16, J.H. Voss, *Mythologische Briefe*, vol. II (Königsberg: Nicolovius, 1794), pp. 277ff., Williamson (2004), pp. 139–40.

placed emphasis on the religion of the Homeric poems and extolled its ennoblement of popular religion and its humanity.¹⁶⁷ As Williamson observes, in Voss' eyes, 'to collapse the naked, beautiful bodies of Homer into the animals or half-animals worshiped by the Egyptians and the Indians was to corrupt the essential humanistic qualities of Greek mythology.'¹⁶⁸ Voss further opposed Heyne's view that the Greek gods went back to Pelasgian and 'Oriental' symbols or fetishes.¹⁶⁹ To take the case of Apollo as an example, drawing on the views of his teacher, Heyne, M.G. Hermann held that Apollo had been a Pelasgian symbol of the sun. In his eyes, Apollo's arrows and sword stood for the rays of the sun and so forth.¹⁷⁰ Voss objected that the solar interpretation of Apollo proposed by Heyne was primarily based on Orphic hymns, which as late sources, should not be used as evidence for the Apollo of the ancient Pelasgians.¹⁷¹ He called attention to the portrayal of Apollo in Homeric poetry and argued that in Homer Apollo was not identifiable with Helios just as Artemis was not identifiable with Selene. In the Homeric epics, Voss emphasized, Apollo's provinces were archery, prophecy and music and not the driving of the sun's chariot. In his opinion, it was only after Homer that allegorical interpretations of Apollo and Artemis as the sun and the moon arose.¹⁷² More broadly, Voss argued that the Greek gods may have been responsible for different domains of the natural world as they had been of the moral, but underscored that they were

¹⁶⁷ For example: 'Homer und die ältesten Dichter haben die würdigsten Volksbe-griffe ihrer Zeiten und Gegenden ausgehoben, und durch des begeisterten Herzens Licht und Wärme unmerklich veredelt', 'Sichtbar entwickelt sich bei Homer der Keim der erhabenen Menschlichkeit' Voss I (1794), pp. 20, 21.

¹⁶⁸ Williamson (2004), pp. 139–40.

¹⁶⁹ Heyne argued, for instance, that the name 'Jove' went back to a Pelasgian fetish and that Dionysos originated in 'Oriental' symbols: C.G. Heyne, 'De caussis fabularum seu mythorum veterum physicis', *Opuscula Academica Collecta*, vol. I (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1785), pp. 184–206 at p. 206, C.G. Heyne, *Ad Apollodori Atheniensis Bibliothecam Notae*, vol. II (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1783), p. 571. Cf. Heidenreich (2006), p. 465.

¹⁷⁰ M.G. Hermann, *Handbuch der Mythologie aus Homer und Hesiod, als Grundlage zu einer richtigern Fabellehre des Alterthums* (Berlin/Stettin: Nicolai, 1787), pp. 271, 273. Cf. C.G. Heyne, 'De Origine et Caussis Fabularum Homericarum Commentatio', *Novi Commentarii Societatis Regiae Scientiarum Gottingensis*, vol. VIII, (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1777), pp. 34–58 at p. 52, Voss I (1794), p. 13.

¹⁷¹ Voss I (1794), p. 13, Espagne (2010b), p. 145.

¹⁷² Voss II (1794), p. 334.

persons acting independently, according to their own will, and not under the constraint of their *Amtspflicht*.¹⁷³

Voss resumed his opposition to the solar interpretation of Apollo and to the physical interpretation of the Greek gods more generally in his *Antisymbolik* directed this time against such writings as J.J. Görres' *Mythengeschichte der Asiatischen Welt* (1810) and, above all, Creuzer's *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker* (1810–12).

F. Creuzer (1771–1858), 'the romantic among the philologists' according to some,¹⁷⁴ 'the prince of mystics' according to others,¹⁷⁵ studied theology and philosophy at the Universities of Marburg, Jena and Tübingen. In 1804, he assumed a professorial position at Heidelberg where he became associated with the romantic circle of A. Schlegel (1767–1845) and F. Schlegel (1772–1829), the poets L. Tieck (1773–1853) and A. von Arnim (1781–1831) and the Catholic publicist and politician J.J. Görres (1776–1848).¹⁷⁶ In the *Symbolik* Creuzer put forward an account of the religions of the ancient world from India and Egypt to Greece.¹⁷⁷ He portrayed the mysteries of ancient religions as *Lehrinstitute* in which priests instructed the initiates in doctrines of Eastern *Urweisheit*—for example, concerning the afterlife.¹⁷⁸ In the foreword to the first volume of the *Symbolik* Creuzer explicitly touched on the question of the relation of Christianity with ancient religions. He maintained that the religious culture of the ancient world and especially of the Greeks was considerably similar to Christianity as far as the mysteries were concerned while Greek public worship he described as a necessary precursor of

¹⁷³ Voss I (1794), pp. 16–17. Cf. Williamson (2004), p. 62.

¹⁷⁴ Bursian (1883), p. 562.

¹⁷⁵ T. Keightley, *The Mythology of Ancient Greece and Italy* (London: Whittaker, 1838, second edition), p. 205.

¹⁷⁶ Gruppe (1921), p. 127. On the romantic circle at Heidelberg see Th. Ziolkowski, *Heidelberger Romantik. Mythos und Symbol* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2009).

¹⁷⁷ On the *Symbolik* see M. Galland-Szymkowiak, 'La Symbolique de Friedrich Creuzer. Philologie, Mythologie, Philosophie', *Revue Germanique Internationale* 14, 2011, pp. 91–112, Fornaro (2001), Ziolkowski (2009), pp. 186–91, Graf (1993), pp. 20–2.

¹⁷⁸ The emphasis on the role of priests was a salient feature of the *Symbolik*. In his autobiography, Creuzer stated that his work showed how 'alle ethische und politische Sittigung des Menschengeschlechts nur durch priesterliche Institutionen vererbt und veredelt worden'. F. Creuzer, *Aus dem Leben eines alten Professors* (Leipzig/Darmstadt: Leske, 1848), p. 56. Cf. Williamson (2004), p. 149. The prominence of the priests was one of the major reasons for the Protestant discomfort with Creuzer's work: Fornaro (2001), p. 33.

Christianity.¹⁷⁹ The implications of this could not and were not missed by his critics. Creuzer tended to trace the Greek gods to Egyptian and Indian models. Recalling earlier symbolist scholars like Dupuis or Heyne, he held that Apollo was, like many of the other gods of ancient religions, an incarnation of the sun. His worship largely derived from the worship of Egyptian sun-deities like Horus which priests brought over to Greece.¹⁸⁰ Indicative of the significance attached to the question of the solar interpretation of Apollo is the fact that in the foreword to the second volume of the *Symbolik* Creuzer stated that he was being attacked for daring to revive 'the so sharply forbidden doctrine of an ancient solar Apollo', but he defiantly stood his ground.¹⁸¹ Creuzer acknowledged that Apollo's original association with the sun frequently got obscured so that he could primarily appear as the god of the bow, of music and prophecy. This, he conceded to Voss, was how he was essentially represented in Homeric poetry in accordance with Homer's tendency to 'humanize' the divine. However, unlike Voss, Creuzer argued that the Homeric conception of Apollo was not the original one, but rather represented a temporary victory of poetry over the earlier solar conception of the ancient Eastern priestly doctrines.¹⁸² Accordingly, he maintained that the identification of Apollo and Helios visible in Greek philosophical thought after Homer and down to late antiquity was not a new development, but rather amounted to a re-emergence of the older conception of the god.¹⁸³

The *Symbolik* initially met with an enthusiastic reception, especially in romantic circles. However, it was eventually subjected to a devastating attack from 'rationalist' classical scholars such as G. Hermann and C. Lobeck, in addition to Voss.¹⁸⁴ The theory that

¹⁷⁹ F. Creuzer, *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen*, vol. I (Leipzig/Darmstadt: Leske, 1810), p. ix.

¹⁸⁰ F. Creuzer, *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen*, vol. II (Leipzig/Darmstadt: Leske, 1811), p. 148.

¹⁸¹ Creuzer (1811), p. v.

¹⁸² On Creuzer's interest in going beyond the 'Anthropismus' of Homer and Hesiod see Fornaro (2001), p. 32. On the romantic interest in pre-Homeric times see Henrichs (1987), p. 12.

¹⁸³ Creuzer (1811), pp. 154, 155.

¹⁸⁴ Bursian (1883), pp. 572ff. Important documents pertaining to the debate between Creuzer and his critics are collected in E. Howald, *Der Kampf um Creuzers Symbolik* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1926). For recent discussions see S. Fornaro, 'Die Mythologie übersetzen. Der Briefwechsel zwischen Friedrich Creuzer und Gottfried

ancient priests had been custodians of secret doctrines deriving from the East communicated in the mysteries Creuzer's *Symbolik* shared with eighteenth-century mythological writings.¹⁸⁵ The criticism against it contributed to the gradual decline of the influence of these themes in subsequent nineteenth-century German scholarship on Greek religion.¹⁸⁶ In the case of Voss, personal animosity, professional rivalry and confessional polemics contributed to a particularly intense attack on Creuzer.¹⁸⁷ Voss presented himself as a champion of the rational Protestantism of the Enlightenment against the apparent revitalization of Catholicism in contemporary Germany.¹⁸⁸ In his eyes, the role that Creuzer ascribed to mysteries and priests, his self-confessed tendency to mysticism and the similarities between his account of ancient religions and that of Görres were redolent of Catholic propaganda,¹⁸⁹ although Creuzer had a Lutheran background and insisted that he had not converted to Catholicism. In his *Antisymbolik*, Voss warned against the outbreak of an epidemic of

Hermann', in S. Rebenich (2010), pp. 75–97, Marchand (2009), pp. 66–71, G. Schwinge, 'Creuzers *Symbolik und Mythologie* und der Antisymbolikstreit mit Voß sowie dessen Kryptokatholizismusvorwurf', in F. Engehausen, A. Schlechter, and J.P. Schwindt (eds.), *Friedrich Creuzer 1771–1858. Philologie und Mythologie im Zeitalter der Romantik* (Heidelberg: Regionalkultur, 2008), pp. 73–88, Williamson (2004), pp. 135–50, Humphreys (2004), pp. 199–201, Most (1997).

¹⁸⁵ L. Friedländer, 'Griechische Mythologie', *Deutsche Rundschau* LIII, 1887, pp. 83–100 at p. 91.

¹⁸⁶ On the (rather isolated) followers of Creuzer in later nineteenth-century German scholarship see Marchand (2009), p. 69, O. Gruppe, *Die Griechischen Culte und Mythen in ihren Beziehung zu den Orientalischen Religionen* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1887), pp. 42–3. Symbolism remained most influential in the area of *Kunstmythologie*: Gruppe (1921), pp. 137ff. Outside of Germany, the influence of Creuzer's *Symbolik* was particularly strong in France through Guignaut's translation: Fornaro (2010), pp. 88–90, M.-M. Münch, *Joseph-Daniel Guignaut et sa Traduction de la Symbolique de Creuzer* (Rennes: Institut de littérature générale et comparée de l'U.E.R. Littérature, Université de Haute Bretagne, 1981). W.P. Sohnle, *Georg Friedrich Creuzers "Symbolik und Mythologie" in Frankreich. Eine Untersuchung ihres Einflusses auf Victor Cousin, Edgar Quinet, Jules Michelet und Gustave Flaubert* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1972), J. Jacquier, 'Zwischen Wissenschaft und Phantastik. Zur Rezeption der *Symbolik* in Frankreich', in Engehausen (2008), pp. 113–26.

¹⁸⁷ Williamson (2004), p. 141.

¹⁸⁸ Schwinge (2008), p. 73, Williamson (2004), pp. 140–2.

¹⁸⁹ For example, Voss (1824), pp. 24, 383, Williamson (2004), pp. 140–1. Fornaro (2010), p. 89. On Görres' account of ancient religions see P. Michelsen, 'Der Sog der Mythe. Zu Joseph Görres' "Mythengeschichte der asiatischen Welt"', in Strack (1987), pp. 444–65, Ziolkowski (2009), pp. 61–6, 181–5.

'papist mysticism'.¹⁹⁰ He called upon both Protestants and Catholics to reject the deceptive *Symbolik* which was hostile to reason and take heed lest its ideas found their way into schools and infected the younger generations.¹⁹¹ Voss further denounced Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* as providing the intellectual foundation of Creuzer's *Symbolik*.¹⁹² This contributed to a long-lasting tendency among different strands of later German classical scholarship against the intrusion of the philosophical ideas of Schelling in the study of the religions of antiquity.¹⁹³

The question of the solar interpretation of Apollo and of the physical interpretation of the Greek gods in general constitutes an important, yet overlooked aspect in the debate between Voss and Creuzer. For Voss, one of the key parts of the 'Catholic' project of the *Symbolik* was the solar interpretation of the gods of ancient religions. He argued that the emphasis on solar deities coming from the East was intended to evoke the rise of the Roman *Christussonne*. The *Symbolik*, he maintained, was intended to show a solar religion finding its way from India to Rome.¹⁹⁴ Echoes of the association of the sun-god Apollo with the French Catholic monarchy since the

¹⁹⁰ Voss (1824), p. 383. One may compare Heine's attack on the Schlegels' writings on India as vehicles of Catholic mysticism: Marchand (2009), p. 70. On the tendency to see in India a precursor of Catholic Christianity see further R. Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 216–18, B. Maier, 'Creuzer, Georg Friedrich', in P. Kuhlmann and H. Schneider (eds.), *History of Classical Scholarship—A Biographical Dictionary, Brill's Neue Pauly*. Supplements I. Volume 6 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 124–6 at p. 125.

¹⁹¹ Voss (1824), p. 408, Bursian (1883), pp. 580–1.

¹⁹² Voss (1824), p. 371. On the influence in the other direction, of Creuzer's *Symbolik* on Schelling, see S. Richter, 'Perspektiven idealistischer Symboltheorien—Creuzers Forschungen im Fokus von Schellings und Hegels Symbolverständnis', in Engehausen (2008), pp. 89–98, Galland-Szymkowiak (2011), pp. 104–12.

¹⁹³ According to Bursian, 'Auch hat diese mythologisch=theosophische Speculation Schelling's ebenso wenig auf die wissenschaftliche Entwicklung der Mythologie, als die letzte Form seiner Philosophie überhaupt auf die Fortbildung der Philosophie einen irgendwie breiten oder nachhaltigen Einfluß ausgeübt' Bursian (1883), p. 1200. On the (few) followers of Schelling in the study of Greek religion see *ibid.* W.F. Otto, for whom Schelling's writings were 'immer noch der großartigste Anlauf, dem Mythos auf seiner eigenen Höhe zu begegnen' was once again in the minority in regretting Schelling's lack of influence: W.F. Otto, *Die Gestalt und das Sein* (Dusseldorf/Cologne: Diederich, 1955), p. 221. Cf. W.F. Otto, *Dionysos. Mythos und Kultus* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1933), p. 46 and W.F. Otto, *Theophrasia. Der Geist der altgriechischen Religion* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1956), p. 13.

¹⁹⁴ Voss (1824), pp. 278, 335. Cf. Konaris (2011), p. 469.

time of Louis XIV¹⁹⁵ may have also contributed to Voss' animosity. Furthermore, in his eyes, sun- and fire-worship were closely associated with Eastern mysticism, orgiasm and theriomorphism which, in contrast to his 'romantic Catholic' adversaries, he radically wanted to dissociate the Greeks from.¹⁹⁶ As Vanden Heuvel notes, Voss 'held the Greeks to be the forebears of enlightened German Protestantism: open, moderate, and rational, not mystical and oriental'.¹⁹⁷ The notion that the worship of the stars and the sun was 'Barbarian' went back to Aristophanes. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it resonated with what may be called a 'scientific' view of nature-worship as an indication of a 'primitive' way of thinking, incapable of grasping the laws of nature.¹⁹⁸ In the course of the nineteenth century, the theme of a contrast between Oriental *Naturreligionen* and Western 'ethical' or 'spiritual' religions was further taken up by one strand within Indo-European discourse, which as Arvidsson observes, expressed 'The belief in the European's ability to overcome the limitations of nature, the view of (Indo)-European peoples as rational and masterful' in contrast to the 'Orientals'.¹⁹⁹ Although as we shall see in the chapter on physical interpretations, Indo-European Comparative Mythology propagated another, romantic view of the

¹⁹⁵ Heissmeyer (1967), pp. 90–130, Reschke (2009), pp. 314–15.

¹⁹⁶ In the case of Dionysos, for example, Voss objected that 'der [Dionysos], den schweifenden Unmenschen durch Anpflanzung menschliche Sitte gab, den entstellt dieser mischmaschende Symboliker gleich nach der Geburt zum *feurigen Fallosgott* [my emphasis], zum meertauchenden Sonnenstier aus Ägypten und Indien'. Voss (1824), p. 79. More broadly, Voss protested that to the romantic Catholic symbolists 'Durch Mystik allein war Griechenthum ein etwas erträglicheres Heidenthum': Voss (1824), p. 6. Lobeck as well regarded the tendency to mysticism as a 'Schattenseite des griechischen Charakters' and argued that this 'impure element' was originally alien to the Greeks: C.A. Lobeck, 'Ueber den Hang der Völker des Alterthums zur religiösen Mystik' (1821), in A. Lehnerdt (ed.), *Auswahl aus Lobecks Akademischen Reden* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1865), pp. 102–7 at p. 103. Rohde would likewise refer to mysticism as a foreign drop in the Greek blood: E. Rohde, *Die Religion der Griechen* (Heidelberg: Hörning, 1895), p. 27.

¹⁹⁷ Vanden Heuvel (2001), p. 146, n. 90.

¹⁹⁸ Kohl (1987), pp. 117–18, Arvidsson (2006), p. 89. One of the most eminent advocates of a distinction between Oriental *Naturreligionen* and spiritual religions to which he classified Greek religion was Hegel. In his view, 'Die Naturreligion . . . das Rohste, Unvollkommenste ist.' Hegel emphasized that 'Die hellere Sonne des Geistes läßt das natürliche Licht erleuchten'. G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* II. *Werke* 17, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969), pp. 9, 11. Cf. Schmidt (1987), pp. 32–3.

¹⁹⁹ Arvidsson (2006), p. 102. On the Europeans' belief in their superiority over 'primitive' peoples practising nature-worship see further Kohl (1987), pp. 117–18.

ancient Indo-European worship of gods of natural elements,²⁰⁰ the afterlife of such views was such that to the time of Cumont, the spread of 'Oriental' nature-worship in the Roman world could be seen as a relapse into 'barbarity'.²⁰¹ As Humphreys observes, the disparagement of the 'Orient' as primitive marked a break with its celebration as the source of civilization in earlier periods.²⁰²

To go back to Voss, the 'urmystical Sun-Apollo'²⁰³ was, in his eyes, the emblem of the Symbolists' 'Catholic' and 'mystical' interpretation of Greek religion as a religion based on 'Oriental' nature-worship. Time and again he fulminated against the 'archpriests of the mystical *Sonnenthum*'.²⁰⁴ Voss was crucially not alone in so approaching the question of the interpretation of Apollo. As Keightley noted, 'Mythologists are divided into two parties respecting the original nature of Leto and her children, the one regarding them as physical, the other as moral beings.' In addition to Voss, the latter included Wolf, G. Hermann (1772–1848) and C.A. Lobeck (1781–1860) as well as K.O. Müller (1797–1840); the former consisted of Heyne, Creuzer and 'the whole body of the mystics'.²⁰⁵ As we shall see, this was a

²⁰⁰ Cf. Arvidsson (2006), p. 89, Kohl (1987), p. 117.

²⁰¹ F. Cumont, *Les Religions Orientales Dans le Paganisme Romain* (Paris: Leroux, 1906), p. 33. Cf. Farnell's statement that 'when, shortly before and after the beginning of the Graeco-Roman period, a wave of sun-worship welled from the East over the West, it may have brought with it religious ideas of high spirituality and ethical purity, yet by the race-consciousness of the Hellenes it must have been judged to be a regress towards a barbaric past'. Farnell (1911), pp. 9–10. In 1887, Gruppe argued against the still widespread assumption that Oriental religions consisted in direct nature-worship: Gruppe (1887), pp. 47–8. On the notion of 'Oriental religions' in the history of scholarship see Bonnet/Pirenne-Delforge/Praet (2009).

²⁰² Humphreys (2004), p. 217. On the romantic fascination with the 'Orient' see Schwab (1984).

²⁰³ Voss (1824), p. 17.

²⁰⁴ Voss (1824), p. 345.

²⁰⁵ Keightley (1838), p. 136. For Hermann, 'certissimum est veteres Graecos neque Apollinem solem nec Dianam lunam esse credidisse.' G. Hermann, *De Apolline et Diana* (Leipzig: Staritz, 1837), p. 4. With respect to the 'confusion' of Apollo with the sun Lobeck stated that Voss was 'exactissimus harum rerum arboriter': C.A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus sive de Theologiae Mysticae Graecorum Causis* (Regimontii Prussorum: Bornträger, 1829), p. 615. Heyne's other eminent student, Ph. Buttmann (1764–1829), sided with his teacher against Voss: Ph. C. Buttmann, 'Ueber die philosophische Deutung der griechischen Gottheiten, insbesondere von Apollon und Artemis' (1803), *Mythologus oder gesammelte Abhandlungen über die Sagen des Alterthums*, vol. I (Berlin: Mylius, 1828), pp. 1–21. On Buttmann see S. Fornaro, 'Buttmann, Philipp Karl', in Kuhlmann/Schneider (2014), pp. 92–3. On advocates and critics of the solar interpretation of Apollo in the period see further C. Fresenius, *De Apollinis numine solari* (Marburg, 1840), pp. 3–4.

battle that the rationalists and K.O. Müller decidedly lost: the solar interpretation of Apollo remained prominent to the end of the nineteenth century. The reasons for the attraction that the solar interpretation exercised throughout the period in the face of such opposition we shall examine in the chapter on physical interpretation.

The debate between Creuzer and his critics did not go unnoticed elsewhere in Europe or America.²⁰⁶ To focus on Britain, on the first page of *The Mythology of Ancient Greece and Italy* (1831), Th. Keightley (1789–1872) pronounced himself ‘to be a disciple of the rational school of Voss and Lobeck’ and declared his ‘wish to oppose, if possible, an effectual bar to the introduction of the wild fancies of Creutzer [*sic*] and the mystics into this country’.²⁰⁷ In the second edition of

²⁰⁶ In France, Guignaut presented the positions of the participants in the debate in the Académie des Inscriptions in 1851: P. Decharme, *Mythologie de la Grèce Antique* (Paris: Garnier, 1879), p. 364. In Greece, K. Paparrhigopoulos (1815–1891) set out the views of Creuzer and Hermann at the beginning of the first volume of his monumental *History of the Hellenic Nation*: K. Παπαρρηγόπουλος, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους*, vol. I (Athens: Passaris, 1862), pp. 36ff. On the history of classical scholarship in Greece see Δ.Ι. Κυρτάρας, *Κατακτώντας την Αρχαιότητα. Ιστοριογραφικές Διαδρομές* (Athens: Polis, 2002), S. Matthaïou, ‘Establishing the Discipline of Classical Philology in Nineteenth-Century Greece’, *The Historical Review* 8, 2011, pp. 117–48, C. Güthenke, ‘Editing the Nation. Classical Scholarship in Greece, ca 1930’, in S.A. Stephens and Ph. Vasunia, (eds.), *Classics and National Cultures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 121–40, C. Güthenke, ‘Inside or Outside of the University. Classical Scholarship in Twentieth-Century Greece’, in A. Chaniotis, A. Kuhn, and Ch. Kuhn (eds.), *Historicizing Classics. Continuities, Contrasts, Controversies* (Heidelberg, 2009), pp. 135–49. In the United States, the Columbia Professor of Greek and Latin Charles Anthon (1797–1867) stated in the preface to his *Classical Dictionary* (1841) that in the treatment of mythological subjects ‘it has been the chief aim of the author to lay before the student the most important speculations of the two great schools (the Mystic and anti-Mystic) which now divide the learned of Europe. At the head of the former stands Creuzer... The champion of the anti-Mystic school appears to be Lobeck, although many eminent names are also marshaled on the same side.’ Anthon went on to state that although ‘it has been the aim of the author to give a fair and impartial view of both systems... he cannot doubt but that the former will appear to the student by far the more attractive of the two’. C. Anthon, *A Classical Dictionary* (New York: Harper, 1841), pp. vii, viii.

²⁰⁷ T. Keightley, *The Mythology of Ancient Greece and Italy* (London: Whittaker, Treacher and Co, 1831), p. v. Cf. ‘Creutzer [*sic*] and others, assigning a common source to the systems of India, Egypt, Greece, and other countries, and regarding the East as the original birthplace of mythology’ are ‘justly denominated *Mystics*. Their whole science is founded on accidental resemblances of names and practices, their ideas are conveyed in a highly coloured figurative style, and a certain vague magnificence appears to envelope their conceptions; all calculated to impose on the ignorant and the unwary’ Keightley (1831), pp. 10–11. On Keightley’s rejection of Creuzer cf. M.K. Louis, *Persephone Rises, 1860–1927* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 7. Louis calls

1838 he stated: 'it is against this system that we are most anxious to warn and guard our readers [the book was largely intended for school and university students]. In our eyes it is disgusting from its indelicacy [we are reminded of the symbolists' emphasis on phallic elements] as well as its absurdity; it approaches the confines of impiety, and at times seems even to pass them. The study and adoption of it can hardly fail to injure the intellectual powers, and to produce an indifference towards true religion.' Echoing the anti-papist tone of the *Antisymbolik*, Keightley observed, 'it is remarkable enough that the German mystic mythologists have either embraced Popery or shown a strong tendency toward it.'²⁰⁸ We should note that at the time the Oxford Movement was raising fears about the growth of papal influence in Britain. In less polemical terms than Keightley, but not less firmly, Grote as well distanced himself from Creuzerian Symbolism: 'This theory, though advocated by several learned men, has been shown to be unsupported and erroneous. It implies a mistaken view both of the antiquity and the purport of the mysteries, which cannot be safely carried up even to the age of Hesiod, and which, though imposing and venerable as religious ceremonies, included no recondite or esoteric teaching.'²⁰⁹

The religions of the ancient world had attracted attention in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain as they had in France or Germany. In *A New System, or, an Analysis of Ancient Mythology* (1774), for example, Jacob Bryant (1715–1804), 'unquestionably the most learned and original speculator on mythology of the last century', in the opinion of Blackie,²¹⁰ traced the religions of the ancient world back to the descendants of Ham and to the worship of

attention to other works of Victorian scholarship receptive of influence from Creuzerian symbolism such as R. Mackay's *The Progress of the Intellect* (1850): Louis (2009), pp. 8–13.

²⁰⁸ Keightley (1838), p. 12, n. f.

²⁰⁹ G. Grote, *History of Greece*, vol. I (London: Murray, 1849, second edition), pp. 587–8. Grote further stated that 'The Anti-Symbolik of Voss, and still more the Aglaophamus of Lobeck, are full of instruction on the subject of this supposed interior doctrine, and on the ancient mysteries in general' Grote I (1849), p. 588 n.1. Cf. K. Dockhorn, *Der deutsche Historismus in England* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1950), p. 52.

²¹⁰ J.S. Blackie, 'On Scientific Method in the Interpretation of Popular Myths, with Special Reference to Greek Mythology', *Horae Hellenicae: Essays and Discussions on Some Important Points of Greek Philology and Antiquity* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1874), pp. 167–96 at p. 167.

their ancestor Ham or Amon as the sun.²¹¹ In such writings as *The Origin of Pagan Idolatry* (1816) George S. Faber (1773–1854) attempted to show how the ‘father figures’ of ancient religions were based on Noah.²¹² As Turner observes, ‘such studies . . . constituted the British parallel to the mystical, allegorical, or symbolic interpretations of myth that on the Continent were associated with Friedrich Creuzer’s *Symbolik*.’²¹³ Moreover, as we have seen in *An Account of the Remains of the Worship of Priapus* as well as in *An Inquiry into the Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology* (1818) Payne-Knight examined the religions of antiquity highlighting phallic worship.²¹⁴ Turner emphasizes how later Victorian students of Greek religion and mythology tended not to look back to the writings of their British predecessors—to the tradition of Bryant or Faber or of the provocative Payne-Knight, referring to ‘an inheritance spurned’.²¹⁵ Rather, the main influences on their work came from abroad, especially from Germany, the lead of which in the field of classical studies as in other fields of learning was widely recognized at the time.²¹⁶ Keightley provides a good example of this.²¹⁷ In the preface to the 1838 edition of *The Mythology of Ancient Greece and Italy* he claimed that ‘In selecting Mythology I took possession of a field which lay totally unoccupied’.²¹⁸ Already in the first edition of 1831 he had stated that his book was intended ‘to make known the advances which the knowledge of Classical Mythology has made in Germany’.²¹⁹ On the German side, Keightley’s *Mythology* was, in the eyes of Welcker, the only handbook worthy of note in England, which, otherwise, showed but little vocation for the subject.²²⁰

²¹¹ Feldman/Richardson (1972), p. 244, Arvidsson (2006), pp. 14–17. For Blackie, Bryant’s ‘great work’ could ‘only be compared to a grand chase in the dark, with a few bright flashes of discovery, and happy gleams of suggestion by the way’. Blackie (1874), p. 167.

²¹² Feldman/Richardson (1972), p. 397. ²¹³ Turner (1981), p. 79.

²¹⁴ Turner (1981), p. 81. Feldman/Richardson (1972), pp. 249–56.

²¹⁵ Turner (1981), pp. 77–83.

²¹⁶ On the broader Victorian interest in German scholarship and culture see J.R. Davis, *The Victorians and Germany* (Bern: Lang, 2007a).

²¹⁷ On Keightley see Feldman/Richardson (1972), pp. 443–4, Turner (1981), p. 79.

²¹⁸ Keightley (1838), p. v.

²¹⁹ Keightley (1831), p. v. Anthon stated of Keightley that he ‘deserves the praise of having first laid open to the English reader the stores of German erudition in the department of Mythology’: Anthon (1841), p. viii. Cf. Feldman/Richardson (1972), p. 505.

²²⁰ F.G. Welcker, *Griechische Götterlehre*, vol. I (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1857), p. ix.

German classical scholarship became diffused in nineteenth-century Britain and the Continent in various ways.²²¹ Keightley's presentation of developments in Germany to the British public exemplifies one medium of transmission. Another was the translation into English of major German works. Grote noted that 'Some of the best writers in this department—Boeckh, Niebuhr, O. Müller—have been translated into our language; so that the English public has been enabled to form some idea of the new lights thrown upon many subjects of antiquity by the inestimable aid of German erudition'.²²² In addition, with F. Max Müller (1823–1900), German scholarship had an eminent representative in Oxford for more than half a century.²²³ From the 1820s British scholars also increasingly attended German universities.²²⁴ As we shall see, Victorian students of Greek religion from Blackie to Farnell studied with German teachers.

The cultural transferences among the various national traditions of classical scholarship are increasingly receiving attention.²²⁵ In this context, particular interest is shown in the adaptations that tend to be made to 'imported' scholarship and the new functions it can assume in its recipient cultures. One aspect that I would like to highlight in this respect is the role German scholarship on Greek religion played in the definition of contemporary British classical scholarship in its opposition. Some four decades after Keightley J.S. Blackie (1809–95), who had attended lectures at Göttingen,²²⁶ reiterated that 'of all the

²²¹ On the transmission and impact of German classical scholarship on other national traditions see Bollack (1983). For the case of Britain see further Turner (1981), p. 105, Murray (2010).

²²² Grote (1849), p. vii. For a list of works of nineteenth-century German classical scholarship translated into English see Dockhorn (1950), pp. 72–8.

²²³ Turner (1981), p. 105, Murray (2010), p. 124. For other German scholars in Britain see J.R. Davis, 'Friedrich Max Müller and the Migration of German Academics to Britain in the Nineteenth Century', in S. Manz, M. Schulte Beerbühl, and J.R. Davis (eds.), *Migration and Transfer from Germany to Britain 1660–1914* (Munich: Saur, 2007b), pp. 93–106.

²²⁴ Turner (1981), p. 105.

²²⁵ On cultural transferences see M. Espagne and M. Werner, 'Deutsch-französischer Kulturtransfer als Forschungsgegenstand. Ein Problemskizze', in: M. Espagne and M. Werner (eds.), *Transferts. Les Relations Interculturelles dans l'Espace Franco-Allemand (XVIIIe et XIXe siècle)*, (Paris: Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1988), pp. 11–34, M. Espagne, 'Au-delà du Comparatisme. La Méthode des Transferts Culturels', in Avlami (2010a), pp. 201–21, Murray (2010), p. 127. Cf. R.S. Turner, 'Historicism, Kritik, and the Prussian Professors, 1790 to 1840', in Bollack (1983), pp. 450–78 at p. 450.

²²⁶ Dockhorn (1950), p. 105.

branches of interesting and curious learning, there is none which has been so systematically neglected in this country as mythology' and regretted that 'some of our most recent writers on this subject have not advanced a single step, in respect of scientific method, beyond Jacob Bryant'. By contrast, he noted that the subject had received ample attention (both profitably and unprofitably) by the Germans, 'those grand intellectual pioneers and architects'.²²⁷ The writings of Blackie offer a good illustration of the mixture of admiration, criticism and rivalry that tended to characterize British attitudes towards German scholarship.²²⁸ The latter aspects would inevitably sharpen amid the rapidly deteriorating Anglo-German relations in the years preceding the First World War.²²⁹ Although Blackie acknowledged the lead of German scholars in the field, he referred to 'a peculiar idiosyncrasy of the German people, who, from the earliest germ of their great scholarship, have shown an instinctive aversion to external facts, and an extravagant passion for self-evolved ideas'. He further regretted the growing German influence in Britain: 'In Porson's day it was the fashion to laugh at the Germans, their philosophies, their principles, their ideas, their symbols, and even their doctrine of metres; but now we have got a new light . . . we are ready to receive passively and swear to the mere nonsense of those very men, whose sense, only a few years ago, we were too ignorant and too insolent to recognise.'²³⁰

²²⁷ Blackie (1874), p. 167. One may compare the portrayal of British and German scholarship in G. Elliot's *Middlemarch*. Casaubon's mythological researches were said to be obsolete owing to his lack of German: 'the Germans have taken the lead in historical inquiries, and they laugh at results which are got by groping about in woods with a pocket-compass while they have made good roads', 'Do you not see that it is no use now to be crawling a little way after men of the last century—men like Bryant—and correcting their mistakes?' quoted in R. Ashton, *The German Idea: Four English Writers and the Reception of German Thought 1800–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 153–4.

²²⁸ On the mixed British attitudes to German scholarship see Davis (2007a), pp. 51, 88–98.

²²⁹ Cf. Davis (2007a), pp. 188–9. On the impact of World War I on the relation between German and British scholarship see T. Windsor, 'Rekindling Contact: Anglo-German Academic Exchange after the First World War', in H. Ellis and U. Kirchberger (eds.), *Anglo-German Scholarly Networks in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 212–31. Harrison related that after the start of the war, 'Men of learning . . . write to the papers and vehemently "deny our debt to German scholarship"'. J.E. Harrison, *Alpha and Omega* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1915), p. 253.

²³⁰ J.S. Blackie, *On Scientific Method in the Interpretation of Popular Myths, with special reference to Greek Mythology* (London, 1870), p. 5.

One of his main targets was Max Müller, the principal disseminator of German scholarship in Victorian Britain.²³¹ Half a century later Harrison reiterated that 'Germany is over-theoretical. Untouched, it would seem, by modern realism, she still worships abstractions: she is a belated idealist.' By contrast, she stated of 'our English race' that 'as nation we are intensely practical; we hate theories'.²³² As Davis notes, 'The idea that Germans were letting their philosophical ideas run away with them, and becoming detached from empirical reality, built on long-established precedents in literature and theology.'²³³ Harrison's contemporary, L.R. Farnell (1856–1934), who had studied in Germany in the early 1880s, paid tribute to the pioneering work undertaken by German scholars in the study of Greek mythology. However, like his anthropological mentor, A. Lang, he argued that the emerging discipline of 'British' anthropology, which was largely based on the empirical evidence supplied by the colonies of the British Empire, could contribute to the key question of how to study Greek religion scientifically much more satisfactorily than the insubstantial speculations of the 'German' methods of Indo-Comparative Mythology and 'Nature-mythology'. The portrayal of the conflict between anthropology and Indo-European Comparative Mythology and 'Nature-mythology' as a conflict between British and German scholarship was one of the major ways in which British students of Greek religion sought to differentiate themselves from their German colleagues and constituted an attempt to show that by the end of the nineteenth century, British scholarship had not only caught up with, but had actually overtaken German scholarship.²³⁴ However, the sharp polarization between 'British'

²³¹ Blackie (1874), pp. 168, 184–5. Blackie further juxtaposed British 'judicious sobriety' to the aberrations of Indo-European Comparative Mythology: Blackie (1874), p. 185, n.1.

²³² Harrison (1915), pp. 247, 249–50. On further attempts of British classical scholars to define the 'national' strengths of British classical scholarship in comparison to the German see Stray (1998), pp. 210–12. The most famous example is by G. Murray, who wrote on the subject during the war: G. Murray, 'German Scholarship', *Quarterly Review* 223, 1915, pp. 330–9 at pp. 330–2, discussed in Stray (1998), p. 212. On the study of Classics and its institutional and social base in nineteenth-century Britain in comparison to the Continent see Stray (1998), pp. 23–9.

²³³ Davis (2007a), p. 189.

²³⁴ The Anglo-German competition provided a point of reference for the self-positioning of other national traditions of classical scholarship. Shorey, for example, suggested that American studies of Greek and Roman religion 'hold a middle position between those German philologists who, entrenched in their specialties, have never heard of tabus, totems, corn daemons and year spirits, and the English, half of whom

anthropology and 'German' Indo-European Comparative Mythology and 'Nature-mythology' was tendentious: at a first level, it played down the significance of the work of German scholars like W. Mannhardt (1831–80) for British anthropological writers. What is more, it ignored the fact that a lot of the criticism which scholars like Lang or Farnell levelled against the excesses of 'German' Indo-European Comparative Mythology and 'Nature-mythology' in the name of British common sense, had, in fact, already been raised by critics of these approaches in Germany. On the German side, the works of British anthropological writers like Tylor, Lang or Frazer began to receive attention in contrast to the time of Keightley when British contributions to the subject of Greek religion had not been much thought of. If Wilamowitz was infamously opposed to anthropological approaches to Greek religion,²³⁵ important German students of Greek religion from Rohde and Dieterich to Kern and Deubner would be influenced by the work of British anthropologists.

This study focuses on the treatment of the Greek gods in German and British scholarship after the conclusion of the Creuzer controversy. Such methodological questions as whether Greek religion should be studied comparatively, and, if so, within which comparative framework; what was the impact of geographic and historical conditions on Greek religion; and how far the study of religion should be modelled on the study of language were major issues of contention during this period. The interpretation of the Greek gods became hotly debated against the backdrop of these questions. As we mentioned, this time witnessed crucial developments in the history of the study of the Greek gods: physical interpretations fell from prominence into rapid decline; important new theories such as the theory of universal tribal gods and the theory of *Sondergötter* were advanced as alternatives to the ancient theories that had been prevalent in scholarship up to that point; and the emergence of anthropology in the last decades of the century would strongly influence the study of the Greek gods in the twentieth century. In contrast to its prominence in the eighteenth century, by the early nineteenth century, Euhemerism became largely

have "congregationalized" their souls in the train of Murray's Bacchants, Burnet's Pythagorean Socrates, and Verrall's psychical researches'. P. Shorey, 'Fifty Years of Classical Studies in America', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 50, 1919, pp. 33–61 at pp. 56–7.

²³⁵ Schlesier (1994), p. 315.

defunct as a method of interpretation of the Greek gods in German scholarship.²³⁶ For a great part of the nineteenth century, German classical scholarship was dominated by the debate between proponents of physical interpretations and their opponents. At Königsberg Lehrs continued his teacher Lobeck's rationalist criticism of physical interpretations.²³⁷ However, the most sustained and forceful opposition to physical interpretations came from the side of advocates of the historical-critical approach and the rivalry between them informed the study of Greek religion in Germany from the 1820s to the end of the nineteenth century. As we shall see, the differences between these two interpretive traditions ranged from questions of methodology, the one standing, to an extent, for a language-oriented, the other for a historical/archaeological approach, to the very understanding of the nature of religion.

²³⁶ On the few German representatives of Euhemerism at the beginning of the nineteenth century see Gruppe (1921), pp. 144–5. Euhemerism remained more influential in French scholarship: Decharme (1879), p. viii.

²³⁷ Bursian (1883), p. 718. Lehrs devoted an essay to the refutation of physical interpretations of Greek religion, especially by Preller: 'Naturreligion', Lehrs (1875), pp. 261–300. On Lehrs see S. Fornaro, 'Lehrs, Karl', in Kuhlmann/Schneider (2014), pp. 358–9, W.M. Calder III, 'Karl Lehrs' Ten Commandments for Classical Philologists', *The Classical World* 74, 1980, pp. 227–8.

The Tyranny of Nature over the Greek Gods

Variations of Physical Interpretation

As we mentioned, despite the opposition of rationalist scholars and of K.O. Müller and his followers, physical interpretation remained the single most influential method of interpretation of the Greek gods for a great part of the nineteenth century.* Physical interpretations of the Greek gods and solar interpretations of Apollo in particular did not necessarily have for their advocates in the period the connotations of Eastern mysticism they had for their critics.¹ They could further display significant variations as they were put forward by scholars who employed different methodologies and who did not necessarily see themselves on their account as continuators of Heyne or Creuzer. The notion of a single, homogeneous ‘school of nature-mythology’ is, therefore, misleading.²

Several factors conduced to the enduring prominence of physical interpretations in nineteenth-century scholarship.³ One was, as mentioned, the retreat of one of its main rivals in earlier periods, Euhemerism, as a method of interpretation of the Greek gods. Moreover, in the course of the nineteenth century, physical interpretation received fresh ‘scientific’ support by Indo-European Comparative Mythology.

* The title of the chapter is intended to highlight its prominence and excesses during this period, paraphrasing E.M. Butler’s *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany* (1935).

¹ It is telling that Keightley, for example, who, as we saw, was ardently opposed to ‘Creuzerian mysticism’, in fact, adhered to the view that Apollo’s origins were solar: Keightley (1838), p. 136.

² The term ‘naturmythologische Schule’ is sometimes used to refer specifically to nineteenth-century Indo-European Comparative Mythology: K.-H. Kohl, ‘Naturmythologie’, in H. Cancik, B. Gladigow, and K.-H. Kohl (eds.), *Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe*, vol. 4 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1998), pp. 226–30 at pp. 228–9.

³ Cf. Arvidsson (2006), pp. 87–8.

The preponderance of elemental or physical deities in the Veda reinforced the physical interpretation of the deities of the other Indo-European religions.⁴ Thus nineteenth-century scholars who advanced physical interpretations of the Greek gods could claim that their approach was at once supported by ancient sources such as Stoic allegory and in line with the latest 'scientific' developments in the discipline. In the course of this chapter, however, I would like to lay stress on a further factor: as Lehmann observed, physical explanations were taken up with enthusiasm by nature-loving Romanticism.⁵ If to one strand of nineteenth-century scholarship nature-worship appeared non-scientific and 'primitive', to another romantically inclined strand, the physical interpretation of the gods and myths of the religions of antiquity resonated with their own feeling for nature and conjured an image of life unspoiled by technological progress and industrialization.⁶ It should be noted that several of the advocates of physical interpretation examined in this book had travelled to Greece and were captivated by its natural beauty. Like other contemporary Western travellers,⁷ they tended to see in Greek nature the unchanged living link between antiquity and the present.⁸ Their admiring descriptions of the landscapes and the natural phenomena they encountered in Greece,⁹ which they regarded as providing the foundations of Greek religion, suggest that they were encouraged in putting forward physical interpretations by their own attraction to nature. In this context, attention should also be drawn to the debate

⁴ Bremmer (2005), pp. 25–6.

⁵ E. Lehmann, 'Zur Geschichte der Religionsgeschichte', in A. Bertholet and E. Lehmann (eds), *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, vol. I (Tübingen: Mohr, 1925), pp. 1–22 at p. 8.

⁶ Arvidsson (2006), pp. 88–9, cf. 'für naturliebende Menschen wird die Naturmythologie immer die dichterischste, die lieblichste, die Lieblingsvariante der Mythologie bleiben.' Burkert (1980), p. 169, Kohl (1998), pp. 227–28. On comparable attraction exercised by the 'Nature-religions' of other ancient peoples or of modern non-Western peoples today see Kohl (1987), pp. 103–4, 120–1.

⁷ On German travellers to Greece see E. Wolf-Crome (ed.), *Zwischen Olymp und Acheron. Berichte und Dokumente aus der griechischen Welt von deutschen Reisenden des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Zurich: Atlantis, 1971), D. Ipsen, *Das Land der Griechen mit der Seele suchend* (Osnabrück: Rasch, 1999).

⁸ There were, however, also those who argued that Greek nature itself had changed in the course of time: Wolf-Crome (1971), p. 197.

⁹ On the wider fascination with the nature and landscape of Greece in German romantic literature see C. Güthenke, *Placing Modern Greece. The Dynamics of Romantic Hellenism 1770–1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

waged in the nineteenth century over the similarities and differences between ancient and modern attitudes towards nature. The sense of alienation from nature in the wake of increasing industrialization and urbanization is a recurrent motif in both Germany and Britain during the period.¹⁰ Motz gave expression to a widely-shared sentiment when he stated in 1865 that nature had become 'to us . . . a foreign land'.¹¹ The mechanistic conception of nature associated with the rationalist thought of the Enlightenment and the growing sense of alienation provoked a reaction in late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century poets from Schiller and Hölderlin to Byron and Wordsworth, key aspects of which were the notions of kinship and sympathy with nature and even its adoration in religious terms.¹² In his seminal essay 'Über naïve und sentimentalische Dichtung' (1795–96) Schiller famously argued that there was a sharp contrast between ancient 'naïve' and modern 'sentimental' attitudes to nature.¹³ In his view, because, unlike the moderns, the Greeks had not yet been alienated from nature, their poetry did not display the sentimental yearning for nature typical of modern romantic poetry: 'When one remembers the beauties of nature which surrounded the ancient Greeks . . . then one is unpleasantly surprised to notice that one meets with so few signs of the *sentimental* interests with which we moderns cling to natural scenes and natural characters. The Greek is indeed in the highest degree exact, faithful, detailed in the descriptions of nature, but yet no more and with no greater participation of the heart than in the description of a costume, a shield, a suit of armour, a household utensil or any mechanical product . . . Nature seems more to interest his understanding and his desire for knowledge than his moral sense; he does not cling with inwardness, with emotion, with sweet sorrow to her as we moderns do.'¹⁴ The human forms of Greek statuary as opposed to modern landscape painting were regarded as emblematic of the different foci of ancient

¹⁰ Cf. Güthenke (2008), p. 5.

¹¹ H. Motz, *Ueber die Empfindung der Naturschönheit bei den Alten* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1865), p. 24.

¹² On attitudes towards nature in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literature see Hoffmeister (1978), pp. 161–6.

¹³ Cf. Güthenke (2008), pp. 30–1.

¹⁴ H. Watanabe-O' Kelly, *On the Naïve and Sentimental in Literature by Friedrich Schiller* (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1981), pp. 32–3.

and modern art and sensibility.¹⁵ Schiller's thesis initiated an intense debate in Germany throughout the nineteenth century, in which some of the most important classical scholars of the period from Lobeck and Lehrs to Rohde and Wilamowitz as well as literary critics and geographers took part.¹⁶ A comparable debate erupted in Britain over Ruskin's claim that the Greeks had not been interested in picturesque landscape.¹⁷ As a result, the portrayal of nature in Greek literature and art from the earliest times to late antiquity was subjected to scrutiny.

Advocates of physical interpretations of Greek religion played a crucial, if underappreciated, role in these debates. The adoration of nature which was missed in Greek literature and art of the archaic and classical period was to them visible in Greek religion. As late as 1875, Roscher would devote an essay to demonstrating against Schiller that the Greeks had had, in fact, a profound feeling for nature which was demonstrable, first of all, in their religion.¹⁸ Interpreted as Nature-mythology, Greek mythology could be said to be 'full of rejoicing for the resurrection of nature, full of sorrow for its demise'.¹⁹ As mentioned, there could be considerable differences among scholars in the physical tradition; they tended to be in agreement, however, in taking Greek religion to suggest a sympathy with, and adoration of, nature that was comparable to the sympathy with, and adoration of, nature in the nature-poetry of their own day. In the secondary

¹⁵ A. Biese, *Das Naturgefühl im Wandel der Zeiten* (Leipzig: Quelle and Meyer, 1926), p. 11. Cf. C.A. Lobeck, 'Wie hoch nach der Meinung des Alterthums der Einfluss einer schönen Naturumgebung auf die geistige Bildung anzuschlagen sei', in Lehnerdt (1865), pp. 98–102 at p. 100.

¹⁶ Motz revealingly stated: 'Wenn man einen Blick auf die umfangreiche Literatur wirft, welche sich mit unserm Thema beschäftigt, und die Reihe bedeutender Namen mustert, die pro et contra in der Streitfrage über die Begabung der Alten für einen innigen Genuß der Naturschönheit aufgetreten sind, so könnte es scheinen, als kämen wir mit einer Ilias post Homerum': Motz (1865), p. 1. Cf. A. Biese, *Die Entwicklung des Naturgefühls bei den Griechen* (Kiel: Lipsius and Tischer, 1882), pp. 4–6.

¹⁷ Jenkyns (1980), p. 165. The controversy still raged to the time of S.H. Butcher who added an essay on 'The dawn of romanticism in Greek poetry' to the second edition of his *Some Aspects of the Greek Genius* in 1893. Cf. the chapter on 'Landscape' in Symonds II (1890), pp. 78–125.

¹⁸ W.H. Roscher, *Das tiefe Naturgefühl der Griechen und Römer in seiner historischen Entwicklung* (Meissen: Klinkicht and Sohn, 1875b).

¹⁹ Motz (1865), p. 13. Cf. 'Die griechische Mythologie [ist] ein glänzendes Zeugnis des mächtigen Eindrucks, den die Natur auf den Griechen machte, des innigen Interesses, mit dem er die Vorgänge in der Natur belauschte und menschlich deutete' Biese (1882), p. 9.

literature on Max Müller, it is observed how he drew parallels between the portrayal of nature in ancient Aryan mythology and in the poetry of Wordsworth.²⁰ It should be underscored that Max Müller provides one example of a much broader pattern. Not only the mythology of the Aryans or the Indians, but of the ancient Germans and the Greeks, as well, was time and again compared by scholars in the physical tradition to the attitude towards nature in the poetry of Hölderlin, Rückert or Wordsworth.²¹ In particular, Wordsworth's account of Greek religion in the fourth book of *The Excursion*, according to which, 'The lively Grecian, in a land of hills, / Rivers and fertile plains, and sounding shores, - / Under a cope of sky more variable, / Could find commodious place for every God' or 'Sunbeams . . . might, with small help from fancy, be transformed / Into fleet Oreads' (718–21, 873–6), was taken as a guide to the understanding of Greek religion from Max Müller and Blackie to Pater. Even Frazer cited it much later in the introduction to his study of nature-worship.²² The notion of the essential unity of poetry and mythology as articulated, for example, by F. Schlegel lay at the background of the comparisons that nineteenth-century scholars tended to draw between ancient Greek mythology and modern nature-poetry.²³ Specifically in the case of Apollo, his interpretation as a solar

²⁰ For example, L.P. van den Bosch, *Friedrich Max Müller. A Life Devoted to the Humanities* (Leiden/Boston/Cologne: Brill, 2002), p. 253. S. Connor, 'Conclusion: Myth and Meta-myth in Max Müller and Walter Pater', in Bullen (1989), pp. 199–222 at p. 219.

²¹ In addition to the writings examined in this book W. Schwartz's characteristic-ally entitled *Die poetischen Naturanschauungen der Griechen, Römer und Deutschen in ihrer Beziehung zur Mythologie* (Berlin: Hertz, 1864) offers a further example of this tendency. On Schwartz, brother-in-law and collaborator of A. Kuhn, see Gruppe (1921), pp. 185, 190. Hölderlin would be seen as capturing the 'spirit' of Greek religion to the first half of the twentieth century by as different scholars as W. Jaeger and W.F. Otto. Thus the former stated 'In Hölderlins einsamer Seele stieg . . . die seherische Vision der göttlich-natürlichen Kräfte auf . . . Die echten Quellen [my emphasis] der altgriechischen Religion, scheinbar seit Jahrtausenden versiegt, begannen wieder zu strömen in seinen Versen.' W. Jaeger, *Die geistige Gegenwart der Antike* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1929), p. 20. Otto wrote an essay on 'Der griechische Göttermythos bei Goethe und Hölderlin', in Otto (1955), pp. 181–210. On Otto's interest in Hölderlin see J. Donnenberg, *Die Götterlehre Walter Friedrich Ottos. Weg oder Irrweg moderner Religionswissenschaft?* (Innsbruck: University Dissertation, 1961), p. 5.

²² Blackie (1870), p. 2, J.G. Frazer, *The Worship of Nature*, vol. I (London: Macmillan, 1926), p. 6. On Wordsworth's portrayal of Greek religion in *The Excursion* see Louis (2009), pp. 3–8.

²³ For Schlegel, mythology was 'ein hieroglyphischer Ausdruck der umgebenden Natur': Fr. Schlegel, 'Rede über die Mythologie' (1800), F. Schlegel, *Gespräch über die Poesie. Mit einem Nachwort von Hans Eichner* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1968), pp. 311–22

god by scholars in the physical tradition had a parallel in his portrayal as a solar god in contemporary poetry.²⁴ It is characteristic for this period in the history of the discipline that 'a vivid sense of nature, i.e., the capacity to conceive of nature poetically or rather to reawaken to such a conception'²⁵ could be listed as the first quality the true student of Greek religion ought to be endowed with. The portrayal of Greek religion by advocates of physical interpretations has, therefore, a broader significance for the perception of the Greeks during the nineteenth century as it transformed the question of the Greek attitude to nature from a point of difference, as it had been for Schiller and for adherents of his view, into a point of resemblance to the (romantic) moderns.

I. THE REDISCOVERY OF GREECE AND PHYSICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF GREEK RELIGION: PETER WILHELM FORCHHAMMER (1801–94)

As mentioned, in the course of the nineteenth century, Greece became increasingly accessible to German classical scholars. P.W. Forchhammer stands out as the first modern student of Greek religion to have travelled to Greece.²⁶

at pp. 313, 318, Kohl (1998), p. 227, Hoffmeister (1978), pp. 124–5, van den Bosch (2002), p. 252.

²⁴ As, for example, in book IV of Wordsworth's *The Excursion* (edition of 1850), 858–9 or Shelley's *Hymn to Apollo*. On Apollo as a sun-god in literature and art see Reid (1993), pp. 172–8. On the broader Victorian fascination with the sun see Bullen (1989). Goethe famously proclaimed: 'Fragt man mich, ob es in meiner Natur sei, die Sonne zu verehren, so sage ich abermals: durchaus! Denn sie ist gleichfalls eine Offenbarung des Höchsten, und zwar die mächtigste, die uns Erdenkindern wahrzunehmen vergönnt ist. Ich anbede in ihr das Licht und die zeugende Kraft Gottes, wodurch allein wir leben, weben und sind, und alle Pflanzen und Tiere mit uns.' J.P. Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe* (Wiesbaden: Insel, 1955), pp. 690–1.

²⁵ J.F. Lauer, *System der griechischen Mythologie* (Berlin: Reimer, 1853), p. 15. One may compare in French scholarship Decharme's view that to understand the metaphors that formed the basis of Greek myths, 'il faut y apporter encore un sentiment profond de la nature et une sorte de divination poétique'. Decharme (1879), p. xvii. Cf. Detienne (1986), p. 11.

²⁶ Friedländer (1887), p. 92. A. Höck and L. Pertsch, *P.W. Forchhammer. Ein Gedenkblatt* (Kiel: Eckhardt, 1898), p. 66.

Peter Wilhelm Forchhammer was born at Husum in Schleswig in 1801. Several members of his family had been pastors and his father and grandfather had studied theology.²⁷ Forchhammer went to school at Tondern and later attended the Gymnasium at Lübeck. Continuing in the family tradition, he began his studies in theology, as well as in philology, in 1821 at the University of Kiel. In 1824, he spent a semester at the University of Leipzig with G. Hermann, the influence of whom is clearly visible, as we shall see, in his writings on Greek religion. In 1828, he obtained his doctorate at Kiel with a dissertation on 'Quaestiones Areopagiticae'.²⁸ After the completion of his studies Forchhammer became *Privatdocent für klassische Philologie und Archäologie* at Kiel, *ausserordentlicher Professor* in 1836 and *ordentlicher Professor* in 1843. His academic career at Kiel lasted to the end of his life in 1894.²⁹ In 1830–4 and 1838–40, Forchhammer travelled extensively in Italy, Greece, Asia Minor and Egypt.³⁰ These travels awakened his interest in the fields of topography and mythology which he pursued throughout his life.³¹ Forchhammer lectured and wrote on Greek religion for more than half a century. From his *Hellenika. Griechenland, im Neuen das Alte* (1837) to his last work, *Homer. Seine Sprache, die Kampfplätze seiner Heroen und Götter in der Troas: ein letztes Wort zur Erklärung der Ilias* (1893), his approach to Greek religion remained fundamentally unchanged.³² As we shall see, it was informed, on the one hand, by a scientific interest in the role of geography and climate, and, on the other hand, by a strongly Christianizing perspective and a romantic feeling for nature.

According to Forchhammer, there were three main sources of evidence for gaining insight into the spiritual life of ancient Greece, literary sources, works of art, and 'the imperishable nature of the Hellenic land'.³³ In his eyes, the latter was the most important for the

²⁷ Höck/Pertsch (1898), p. 9.

²⁸ Höck/Pertsch (1898), pp. 15, 17, 20–4.

²⁹ Höck/Pertsch (1898), p. 24.

³⁰ Höck/Pertsch (1898), pp. 25, 35–43.

³¹ 'Seine griechischen Reisen haben Forchhammer zum Mythologen gemacht': I. Bruns, 'Gedächtnisrede auf Peter Wilhelm Forchhammer', *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Munich: Beck, 1905), pp. 437–47 at p. 441.

³² Höck/Pertsch (1898), pp. 56–84.

³³ P.W. Forchhammer, *Die Sphinx. Eine mythologisch-archäologische Abhandlung* (Halle: Gebauer-Schwetschke, 1852), p. 3. On Forchhammer's interest in archaeology and art monuments (he founded and acted as director of the Kunstmuseum of Kiel University) see Höck/Pertsch (1898), pp. 85–107.

study of Greek religion and yet the least tapped as it had been fundamentally inaccessible to previous generations of scholars. Attesting to the influence of Herderian ideas, Forchhammer suggested that 'the nature of the country must inevitably have exercised a decisive influence over its people at all times, but especially at their origin'.³⁴ For Forchhammer, the source of Greek religion was not to be sought in foreign lands or by other peoples, nor could it be attributed to Revelation. Rather Greek religion must have had its foundation 'solely in the interaction between nature and man. Nature provides the substance for such a religion, and man gives it form'.³⁵ Accordingly, in his first major work on Greek religion, *Hellenika* (1837) Forchhammer placed emphasis on terrestrial and climatological aspects, 'with a word on what remains, on what is therefore also most ancient, of the land and its nature'.³⁶ The full title, *Hellenika. Griechenland, im Neuen das Alte*, reflected his conviction that the meticulous examination of the geography and climate of modern Greece held the key to the understanding of ancient Greek culture.³⁷ As mentioned, the view that amid all historical changes in the course of the centuries, Greek nature remained the inalterable link between antiquity and the present was a widely shared assumption among

³⁴ P.W. Forchhammer, *Hellenika. Griechenland, im Neuen das Alte* (Berlin: Nicolai, 1837), p. 4.

³⁵ Forchhammer (1837), p. 4. As regards the part played by visits to Greece in prompting reflection on the formative impact of Greek nature on Greek civilization one may compare Bachofen to Forchhammer. In his *Griechische Reise* (1851), the former maintained: 'Was dem Altertum und allen seinen Schöpfungen den großen Charakter leiht, den wir nicht mehr erreichen, jene Verbindung der höchsten Fülle mit dem höchsten Maße, woraus die Vollendung von Form und Inhalt gleichsam von selbst sich ergibt, das findet sich unter jenem Himmelsstriche in der leblosen Natur vorgebildet und aus ihr erst in den Geist des Volkes übertragen.' Cf. Bachofen's reference to a 'mysterious relation' 'der Land und Leute, Natur und Volksart verbindet, und zwischen beiden eine innige Wechselwirkung hervorbringt'. G. Schmidt (ed.), *Johann Jakob Bachofen. Griechische Reise* (Heidelberg: Weissbach, 1927), pp. 31, 67. An interest in the role of geography is also visible in contemporary British historiography: C. Thirlwall (1797–1875), for example, opened his *History of Greece* stating that 'The character of every people is more or less closely connected with that of its land'. C. Thirlwall, *A History of Greece*, vol. 1 (London: Green and Longman, 1835), p. 1.

³⁶ From Forchhammer's *Nachlass* in Höck/Pertsch (1898), pp. 160–6 at p. 161.

³⁷ Höck and Pertsch (1898), p. 56. The same idea informs C. Wachsmuth's *Das alte Griechenland im neuen* (1864), the title of which alludes to Forchhammer's *Hellenika* which Wachsmuth called a 'geistreiches Buch': C. Wachsmuth, *Das alte Griechenland im neuen. Mit einem Anhang über Sitten und Aberglauben der Neugriechen bei Geburt Hochzeit und Tod* (Bonn: Cohen, 1864), pp. 1–2, 45.

contemporary travellers to Greece. Forchhammer's focus on the local Greek context reflects the growing interest in geography in early nineteenth-century German scholarship and signalled a reaction against the derivation of Greek religion from foreign cultures, which, as we saw, was common in previous generations of scholarship. As we shall see, in that respect Forchhammer's approach provides a parallel to that of his friend and fellow-traveller in Greece, K.O. Müller.

In addition to the inspection of Greek nature, Forchhammer employed etymological analysis in his interpretation of Greek myths and their actors. In his view, divine and heroic names denoted 'a main feature of the concept, a main quality of what was being designated'.³⁸ Like his teacher, G. Hermann, Forchhammer objected to foreign etymologies for Greek names. In his view, 'the symbolical language of Greek mythology lies fully within the Greek language'.³⁹ For Forchhammer, as for Hermann, etymology shed light on the physical significance of the Greek gods, recalling Stoic interpretation.⁴⁰ As mentioned, after the barrages of rationalist criticism, the Creuzerian view that in Greek mysteries special knowledge was communicated to the initiates became largely discredited. Forchhammer, however, believed that his approach offered him access to the knowledge which, he imagined, the priests of the Eleusinian mysteries possessed. In his revealingly entitled book, *Daduchos*, he cast himself in the role of an Eleusinian torchbearer expounding the 'true' meaning of Greek myths and their protagonists.⁴¹ Thus he maintained that the name 'Zeus' derived from ζᾱω, ζέω originally meaning 'to be warm'. Accordingly, he argued that Zeus was fundamentally a god of warmth.⁴²

³⁸ P.W. Forchhammer, *Daduchos. Einleitung in das Verstaendniss der hellenischen Mythen, Mythensprache und Mythischen Bauten* (Kiel: Toeche, 1875), p. 25. For recent studies of the names of the Greek gods see N. Belayche and others (eds.), *Nommer les Dieux* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires, 2005).

³⁹ Forchhammer (1875), p. 17. Höck/Pertsch (1898), pp. 79–80. On Hermann's views on mythology and etymology see G.W. Most, 'Hermann gegen Creuzer über die Mythologie', in K. Sier and E. Wöckener-Gade (eds.), *Gottfried Hermann (1772–1848)* (Tübingen: Narr, 2010), pp. 165–79 and Fornaro (2010).

⁴⁰ For Hermann as being in the tradition of Stoic interpretation see Most (2010), pp. 174–5. On Forchhammer's method of myth interpretation see further Höck/Pertsch (1898), pp. 56–84.

⁴¹ Forchhammer (1875), p. v.

⁴² P.W. Forchhammer, *Prolegomena zur Mythologie als Wissenschaft und Lexikon der Mythensprache* (Kiel: Haeseler, 1891), p. 43.

Hera's name derived from ἀήρ and designated her as an air goddess. 'Poseidon' derived from πόσις, πότος und δῆ i.e. γῆ and signified the one who makes the earth moisten and so forth.⁴³ To counter the criticism that his physical interpretation of the Greek gods reduced them to the role of mere enforcers of natural laws and thus deprived them of the freedom of moral agents, Forchhammer laid stress on the point that for all his/her close association with a natural phenomenon, a Greek god(dess) was to be seen as a 'spiritual, freely acting being which is the principle, the ἀρχή, underlying that natural phenomenon, which in turn manifests itself as that phenomenon, but is manifestly not the phenomenon itself'.⁴⁴ There is a strong Christian background to this view and we may recall in this context that Forchhammer had been a student of theology. According to Forchhammer, Greek religion and mythology constituted 'a great commentary on the beginning of the Gospel of John'. He maintained that 'we elucidate the names of the gods that are also the names of things, but in religious faith it is not things that come before the Word; in the beginning is the Word, and things are its manifestations. It is not the cloud that is first, and then its name, and then the goddess—as allegory teaches us. In the first beginnings of the faith of the people, the goddess is first, and the Word is with her, and the cloud is only the revelation of the goddess, who is the Word. And so on through the whole of mythology.'⁴⁵ Like many of his fellow German classical scholars, Forchhammer regarded Christianity and Greek antiquity as the foundation-stones of German culture. His approach illustrates how the ancient Stoic physical paradigm could be re-interpreted from a Christian perspective.

Forchhammer's account of Apollo offers a chance to look more closely at his method of interpretation of the Greek gods. In his opinion, the name 'Apollo' derived from ἀπό and ὅλος—'the

⁴³ Forchhammer (1891), pp. 44, 46.

⁴⁴ Forchhammer (1837), p. 192. Cf. 'die Götter der Griechischen Religion geistige Wesen sind, welche sich in der körperlichen Natur offenbaren' P.W. Forchhammer, *Apollons Ankunft in Delphi* (Kiel: Schwes, 1840), p. 9.

⁴⁵ 'Wir erklären die Namen der Götter, die auch Namen der Dinge sind, aber nicht sind im religiösen Glauben erst die Dinge, dann das Wort, sondern im Anfang ist das Wort, und die Dinge sind des Wortes Erscheinungen. Nicht ist erst die Wolke, und dann ihr Name und dann die Göttin—so bildet die Allegorie.—Dem Glauben des Volks in seinen ersten Anfängen ist erst die Göttin, und das Wort ist bei ihr, und die Wolke ist nur die Offenbarung der Göttin, die das Wort ist. So durch die ganze Mythologie.' Forchhammer (1837), p. 208.

black, dirty water that flows over the earth'.⁴⁶ He argued that Apollo was therefore fundamentally to be seen as god of *Entwässerung* or *Abwässerung*, recalling Kleanthes of Assos' view of Apollo as an enemy of moisture.⁴⁷ In particular, Forchhammer held that Apollo was the god who 'freed' the land from the pernicious waters of winter. According to Forchhammer, most aspects of Apollo could be traced back to this core function.⁴⁸ Thus he suggested that Apollo played the citharis because of the hissing sound of outflowing water or that he was the leader of the Muses because they were the deities of singing springs and resounding streams.⁴⁹ Moreover, Apollo was the god of medicine and justice because winter floodings represented disease and injustice in nature and so forth.⁵⁰ Forchhammer claimed that Apollo's function as a *Gott der Entwässerung* was also reflected in the location of his temples. He argued that they tended to be placed in the vicinity of rivers nearly devoid of water as in Ilissos, Kirrha and Oropos.⁵¹ Forchhammer's emphasis on the local geographical context, which he had closely studied while travelling in Greece, is further visible in his account of the myth of Apollo and Python. He suggested that the swollen waters of the river Pleistos during winter had given rise to the notion of Python. Running through Parnassos and Kirphis, the Pleistos devoured the rivulets it encountered and snaked its way round the fields of the plane wreaking destruction like a monstrous serpent. The story of Apollo's slaying of Python was a mythical expression for the drying up of the waters of the threatening river in the summer.⁵² One may compare his view that Heracles was a geological hero and that his fight with the centaur Nessos should be understood as a description of the separation of the island of Euboea

⁴⁶ Forchhammer (1837), p. 69. Graf (2009), pp. 134ff., G. Nagy, 'The Name of Apollo: Etymology and Essence', in J. Solomon (ed.), *Apollo. Origins and Influences* (Tucson/London: University of Arizona Press, 1994), pp. 3–7.

⁴⁷ Forchhammer (1837), p. 69. Höck/Pertsch (1898), pp. 87–8.

⁴⁸ Forchhammer (1837), p. 69. Cf. Forchhammer (1840), pp. 9–10.

⁴⁹ Forchhammer (1837), p. 71. ⁵⁰ Forchhammer (1840), p. 10.

⁵¹ Forchhammer (1840), p. 13.

⁵² Forchhammer (1840), pp. 10–14. As we shall see this interpretation of the myth was taken over by Preller and was also accepted by Maury in France: 'Cette ingénieuse explication du savant allemande est vraie dans ses traits généraux' L.F.A. Maury, *Histoire des religions de la Grèce antique*, vol. I (Paris: Ladrangue, 1857), p. 136. On Maury see J. Carroy and N. Richard (eds.), *Alfred Maury, Erudit et Rêveur* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires, 2007).

from the Greek mainland, or that the *Iliad* narrated the fight of winter against the earth.⁵³

It should be emphasized that in his writings Forchhammer did not confine himself to putting forward the theory that Greek religion had arisen out of the close interaction of the Greeks with their natural environment. He further gave voice to a sense of dissatisfaction with the monotony of modern life and its alienation from nature and looked back with nostalgia to Greek antiquity when, he imagined, people had lived in harmony with nature.⁵⁴ As we have seen, this theme was a central aspect of the German idealization of Greece as it appeared in the writings of W. von Humboldt or Schiller. We noted in the introduction to this chapter the debate in the nineteenth century over the differences between ancient and modern attitudes towards nature. To Forchhammer, the Greeks, who had been capable of perceiving life and individuality in nature, were revealingly a *pöetisches Volk*.⁵⁵ In his *Daduchos* Forchhammer urged students of Greek religion to study nature, for 'it is the same nature from whose

⁵³ Forchhammer (1837), pp. 16–18, 360. Forchhammer (1837), pp. 57–8.

⁵⁴ Thus a night spent in Athens occasioned the following comment: 'Nach einer Nacht, sternenhell und mild, die wir auf der Burg der Athene unter freiem Himmel zugebracht, erwachen wir früh morgens vor Sonnenaufgang . . . So mögen die ältesten Hellenen jeden Abend entschlummert, jeden Morgen erwacht seyn. Der Himmel war ihnen Dach, war ihnen Licht, war ihnen Uhr und Kalender. Wie ganz anders überkommt dem der Schlaf und das Wachen, der am Abend im engen Kämmerchen, unter dem engeren Bethimmel, gelangweilt durch ein Tagblatt, das Talglicht auslöscht und unter dem monotonen Gepicker der Uhr Gedanken hinwegwünscht, um, nicht wie jene im All, aber im Nichts zu ruhen; der am Morgen erwacht wieder mit dem ersten Gedanken an die Uhr, die Vorhänge aufziehend, gewahrt, dass schon der Morgen und der Tag und die Natur und alles längst den Anfang gefeiert, er selbst zu spät kommend, und immer zu spät, und immer nur nach sich schleppend, als gehöre er nicht mit dazu, und auch nicht mit dazu gehörend, in einem Fremden sich bewegend und Unverstandenen, denn was versteht er, dessen Anfang er nicht versteht'. Forchhammer (1837), p. 44. In this respect, there is a further parallel with Bachofen: 'Wie es [Bachofen refers to his hosts in Greece] mit der Sonne sein Tagewerk beschließt, so erhebt es sich morgen wieder mit ihr, und all sein Leben und Treiben wird durch die vollkommenste Harmonie mit den Geboten der Natur geleitet. Es herrscht zwischen beiden nicht jener Widerstreit, der unser Leben zu einem nie endigenden Kampfe macht. Und das kann dazu dienen, einen Grundzug der antiken Anschauungsweise unserm Verständnis näher zu legen, als es in der düstern Studierstube des Nordens beim unruhigen Schein eines stinkenden Talglichts je geschehen könnte.' Schmidt (1927), p. 54. For comparable nostalgia for Greek antiquity in Victorian Britain see R. Jenkyns, 'United Kingdom', in C.W. Kallendorf (ed.), *A Companion to the Classical Tradition* (Malden Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 265–78 at pp. 276–7.

⁵⁵ Forchhammer (1840), p. 11.

encounter with humankind divine beings originally developed. Forget everything that separates you from nature. Let the sun be your clock, the stars your calendar, your roof the sky.⁵⁶ As this passage indicates, for Forchhammer, the interpretation of the Greek gods merged with the romantic dream of reunification with nature.

When in his *Gedächtnisrede* Bruns came to the point of passing judgment on Forchhammer's contribution to the study of Greek religion, he suggested that it would be unfair to evaluate it by the standards of the present. He argued that if instead one compared Forchhammer's views to the fantastic ideas of Creuzer or to the flat rationalism of Hermann that held sway at the beginning of the century, one would appreciate the fresh air they brought to the field.⁵⁷ Forchhammer's obsession with geographical and meteorological factors and the implausibility of his etymologies had in fact exposed him to heavy criticism from an early stage in his career onwards.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, his approach and especially his views on the relation between Greek myths and their local context proved stimulating to several scholars in Germany, including Preller, Robert, and even Wilamowitz,⁵⁹ and were also taken note of abroad.⁶⁰

Moreover, the negative reactions to the work of Forchhammer should not obscure that, in spite of its extremeness, in certain key respects it was actually very typical of its times. Thus the insistence on the Greekness of Greek religion; the interpretation of Greek myths as innocuous descriptions of natural phenomena rather than immoral

⁵⁶ Forchhammer (1875), p. 15.

⁵⁷ Bruns (1905), p. 442.

⁵⁸ His teacher, Hermann called him an 'entschiedener Neptunist' for his obsession with aquatic phenomena: Hermann to Forchhammer, 11 May 1843, in Höck/Pertsch (1898), pp. 278–80 at p. 279. Welcker pronounced: 'Es ist die Mythologie der Wasserdünste, die sich denn auch selbst in Dunst, wunderliche feingesponnene Dunstgebilde auflöst': R. Kekulé, *Das Leben Friedrich Gottlieb Welckers* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1880), p. 447. In a letter to Nietzsche, Forchhammer's student, Rohde jokingly referred to his teacher as 'Wasserdoctor': O. Crusius, *Erwin Rohde. Ein biographischer Versuch* (Tübingen/Leipzig: Mohr, 1902), p. 22. In the late 1880s, however, Gruppe would still find it necessary to subject Forchhammer's methods to criticism: Gruppe (1887), pp. 56–8.

⁵⁹ Höck/Pertsch (1898), p. 66, Gruppe (1887), pp. 58–9. Wilamowitz suggested as regards the myth of Proteus that 'die siedler, die in den unbewohnten die giganten, die ἄθροι Θῶες vom Athos wiederfanden, meinten, der vater der bösen könige wäre "Aborigines", eine art autochthone, oder besser, autothalasse, und in den vielen haifischen, die ihnen gefährlich wurden, sahen sie seine heerden'. Wilamowitz (1884), p. 27, n. 15 cited in Gruppe (1887), p. 59.

⁶⁰ As we saw in the case of Maury. Decharme provides another example in the following generation of French scholarship.

stories or the stress on the affinity between Greek religion and Christianity are, as we shall see, all representative of broader tendencies in the study of Greek religion in the nineteenth century. Forchhammer's writings further hold paradigmatic significance for nineteenth-century scholarship in that they demonstrate how the increasing first-hand acquaintance of classical scholars with Greece during the period gave fresh support to physical interpretations of Greek religion and how these resonated with contemporary attitudes towards nature. Above all, Forchhammer's work is of importance in the history of the discipline in that it posed with the greatest force the question of the significance of the geographical conditions of the newly rediscovered Greece for Greek religion. With Forchhammer the autopsy of Greek nature became a primary task of the student of Greek religion.⁶¹ Prone to one-sidedness and exaggeration as he was, Forchhammer raised most sharply questions over the significance of landscape for Greek religion or the relation between the geographical location of Greek temples and the character of the gods they were dedicated to that preoccupied scholarship to the present day.⁶²

⁶¹ As Preller, the scholar who was perhaps most appreciative of Forchhammer's approach, stated 'besonders P.W. Forchhammer das Verdienst hat, die Rechte der Naturschauung geltend gemacht zu haben': L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*, vol. I (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1854), p. 23. Echoing Preller Decharme stated: 'Le savant et ingénieux Forchhammer, un des vétérans de la science hellénique, a depuis longtemps montré l'importance de l'étude de la nature de la Grèce pour l'intelligence de sa mythologie.' He added though that 'il s'est souvent complètement égaré en érigeant cette observation en système'. For Decharme, 'il sera donc bon d'avoir les yeux fixés sur la Grèce, d'observer son ciel, ses montagnes et ses mers qui pourront nous donner la clef de quelques-unes de ses fictions mythologiques; mais il faudra aussi savoir s'arracher à propos au plaisir de cette contemplation, pour aller plus loin et pour regarder au delà.' Decharme (1879), pp. xxx–xxxi.

⁶² Like Forchhammer, O. Kern (1863–1942), combined a 'scientific' interest in environmental and geographical factors with a romantic attitude towards nature: 'Nirgends wohl hat die Natur eines Landes einen stärkeren Einfluß auf Wesen, Werden, Wachsen einer Religion ausgeübt als die Griechenlands und Kleinasien', 'Es ist der Zauber der griechischen Religion, daß sie so bodenständig ist wie keine andere, und nur von dem ganz nachempfunden werden kann, der das wunderbare Land mit offenen Augen und mit bereitem Herzen in goldenen Jugendtagen durchwandert hat': O. Kern, *Die Religion der Griechen*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1926), pp. 27, 93. The close association between the Greek gods and the Greek landscape in P. Philippon's *Griechische Gottheiten in ihren Landschaften* (Oslo: Brøgger, 1939) is reminiscent of Forchhammer. In his *Griechische Religion*, Burkert writes, 'Für den modernen Betrachter verschmilzt der Eindruck eines griechischen Heiligtums unlösbar mit dem der griechischen Landschaft.' Burkert (2011), p. 135. For modern studies of sacred space and the role of landscape see F. Graf, 'Heiligtum und Ritual. Das Beispiel der griechisch-römischen Asklepieia', in A. Schachter and J. Bingen (eds.), *Le*

II. ZEUS KRONION AND THE GREEK GODS
 BETWEEN *NATUR* AND *CULTUR*: FRIEDRICH
 GOTTLIEB WELCKER'S *GRIECHISCHE*
GÖTTERLEHRE (1857–63)

In his *Geschichte der klassischen Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte* (1921) Gruppe stated that, according to the judgment of posterity, Welcker's *Griechische Götterlehre* (1857–63) was the most important work on the history of Greek religion to appear in the whole of the nineteenth century.⁶³ I here examine two major themes of this towering work of nineteenth-century scholarship, namely, the account of Zeus as a supreme *Urgott* and the transformation of the major Greek gods from nature-deities into ethical gods with an emphasis on Welcker's strongly Christianizing perspective.

Born in 1784 in Hesse, Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker came from a family of evangelical preachers and was raised in an environment of *heitere Frömmigkeit* of an old German country vicarage.⁶⁴ At the insistence of his pastor father, Welcker studied theology at the University of Giessen⁶⁵ which he would later leave for classical philology. Later in life he stood for a 'rational Christianity', rejecting the Trinity or the belief in the resurrection of the bodies.⁶⁶ Between 1806 and 1808 Welcker travelled to Italy. During his stay he had ample opportunity to study art-monuments,⁶⁷ which remained one of his principal research interests throughout his career.⁶⁸ In Rome Welcker

Sanctuaire Grec (Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique 37, Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1992), pp. 159–99, R.W.M. Schumacher, 'Three Related Sanctuaries of Poseidon: Geraistos, Kalaureia and Tainaron', in N. Marinatos and R. Hägg (eds.), Greek Sanctuaries. New Approaches (London/New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 62–87, R. Buxton, Imaginary Greece: the Contexts of Mythology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 80–113, S.G. Cole, Landscapes, Gender, and Ritual Space (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

⁶³ Gruppe (1921), p. 219.

⁶⁴ Kekulé (1880), p. 3. On Welcker's family background see further K. Betz, *Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker. Ein Leben für Wissenschaft und Vaterland* (Grünberg: Thraum, 1984), pp. 10–22.

⁶⁵ Welcker's autobiographical sketch from his *Nachlass* at the Library of the University of Bonn, pp. 158–9.

⁶⁶ Kekulé (1880), 330–1. Welcker to Gerhard, Bonn, 6 February 1856, from Welcker's *Nachlass* at the Library of the University of Bonn. Cf. Betz (1984), p. 162.

⁶⁷ Kekulé (1880), p. 39.

⁶⁸ Welcker also played a key role in the foundation of the *Akademisches Kunstmuseum* in Bonn: Betz (1984), p. 109.

worked as a tutor in the family of W. von Humboldt who would become a kind of mentor to him.⁶⁹ In 1813 he volunteered in the war against Napoleonic France.⁷⁰ Pflug suggests that Christianity, the sense of being German and classical antiquity were the three axes that defined Welcker's life.⁷¹ Like Forchhammer, Welcker regarded classical antiquity and Christianity as the fountain sources of German culture and, as we shall see, he portrayed Greek religion as a precursor of Christianity. In 1809, Welcker became professor of Greek literature and archaeology at Giessen, a title which had not existed before in German universities.⁷² In 1816 he succeeded Heyne at Göttingen and in 1819 he became professor at Bonn where he remained to his death in 1868. Despite his long stay at Bonn, even in the end of his life he referred to it as a 'foreign Catholic land'.⁷³ As professor at the University of Bonn, Welcker drastically contributed to its international reputation as a leading centre for the study of classical philology.⁷⁴ Welcker's broad erudition as well as his acquaintance with figures like Goethe and W. von Humboldt made him one of the most revered classical scholars of nineteenth-century Germany.⁷⁵

Greek literature, art and religion were among Welcker's chief interests. His *magnum opus* in the field of the latter, the *Griechische Götterlehre*, had been in the planning for more than half a century,⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Kekulé (1880), p. 82, U.K. Goldsmith, 'Wilhelm von Humboldt: Mentor und Freund von Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker', in Calder (1986), pp. 35–52.

⁷⁰ Kekulé (1880), pp. 131–2.

⁷¹ G. Pflug, 'Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker und die Entwicklung der Klassischen Philologie im 19. Jahrhundert', in Calder (1986), pp. 263–76 at p. 269.

⁷² Kekulé (1880), pp. 121–2.

⁷³ Welcker to Henzen, Bonn, 25 January 1855, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Rom, Archiv.

⁷⁴ A. Köhnken, 'F.G. Welcker und die Bonner Philologische Tradition', in Calder (1986), pp. 79–104 at p. 103, A. Köhnken, 'Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker (1784–1868)', *Gymnasium* 97, 1990, pp. 97–103. In Welcker's colleague F.W. Ritschl (1806–1876), Bonn boasted another major figure of nineteenth-century German classical scholarship.

⁷⁵ Köhnken (1986), p. 79. In reviewing the first volume of the *Griechische Götterlehre* for the English public in the late 1850s, the young Max Müller ambivalently stated of Welcker that 'To those who require any preliminary information respecting the author, we may say, first of all, that Welcker is a very old man, a man belonging almost to an age gone by, one of the few men remaining of the heroic age of German scholarship. The present generation . . . looks up to him as the Greeks looked up to Nestor.' F. Max Müller, 'Greek Mythology' (1858a), *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. II (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1867b), pp. 144–55 at p. 144.

⁷⁶ Kekulé (1880), p. 334, Henrichs (1986), p. 182.

and was based on decades of lectures.⁷⁷ In his review of the first volume of the *Götterlehre*, H.D. Müller stated that the German academic community had been eagerly waiting for the appearance of Welcker's work for many years,⁷⁸ although Welcker's views had become fairly well-known through his lectures.

The publication of Welcker's *Griechische Götterlehre* was in part contemporaneous with that of two foundational texts of Indo-European Comparative Mythology, the approach which was to play a prominent role in the study of Greek religion in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, F. Max Müller's essay on Comparative Mythology (1856) and A. Kuhn's *Die Herabkunft des Feuers* (1859). Welcker espoused the premise that, by virtue of belonging to the Indo-European family of peoples, the ancient Greeks and the Germans shared certain traits beyond language including 'the sense for freedom, the profound feeling for nature and what goes together with it, the feeling for religion'.⁷⁹ Of particular interest are Welcker's mention of the feeling for nature and his association of it with the feeling for religion. As we shall see, the relation between the two lay at the basis of his disagreement with Preller over the character of Greek religion. For Welcker, Germans were uniquely qualified to understand, and empathize with, the literary, artistic and philosophic production of the Greeks.⁸⁰ To this extent Welcker stood in the tradition of the belief in an elective affinity between the Greeks and the Germans, one of the most impassioned advocates of which was his mentor, W. von Humboldt. Nevertheless, Welcker was opposed to Indo-European Comparative Mythology as practised by Max Müller and Kuhn which assumed the identity of the names of the gods of the various Indo-European religions. In his view, each Indo-European people had come up with their own names for their gods, even if the

⁷⁷ Welcker (1857), p. viii. Welcker had held lectures on 'Die Religionsgeschichte der Griechen' as early as 1810–11: Kekulé (1880), p. 125. He continued to lecture on the subject under such titles as 'Mythologie' and 'Götterlehre' throughout his career: Kekulé (1880), p. 175. Cf. Henrichs (1986), pp. 183–4.

⁷⁸ H.D. Müller, 'Jahresbericht über Griechische Mythologie', *Philologus* 12, 1857, pp. 531–64 at p. 547. Cf. Max Müller, *Greek Mythology* (1858a), p. 145.

⁷⁹ Welcker (1857), p. 37. Cf. 'Unser Volksstamm zumal zeigt durch die Sprache, durch die ursprünglichen freien gesellschaftlichen Ordnungen, durch Naturgefühl, poetische und speculative Anlage und älteste Religion eine besonders enge Verwandtschaft mit dem der Hellenen'. F.G. Welcker, 'Ueber die Bedeutung der Philologie' (1841), *Kleine Schriften*, vol. IV (Bonn: Weber, 1861), pp. 1–16 at p. 4.

⁸⁰ Welcker (1857), pp. 37–8.

underlying conceptions were shared.⁸¹ Accordingly, Welcker argued, like Hermann and Forchhammer, that the Greeks had expressed the 'highest conceptions or principal qualities' of their gods in names deriving for the most part from their own language.⁸² The correspondence between W. von Humboldt and Welcker shows that they had been exchanging thoughts on the issue of etymology. The former rejected exclusively Greek etymologies for the names of the Greek gods and, ultimately, cast doubt on the force of arguments from etymology altogether. Welcker insisted on the value of etymology and on Greek etymologies for Greek divine names.⁸³ Welcker emphasized that he did not reject foreign etymologies a priori.⁸⁴ However, he argued that the emerging Indo-European comparative linguistics and the growing knowledge of the Egyptian language proved wrong the older Phoenician and Egyptian etymologies of Greek divine names.⁸⁵ Welcker's stance, however, appears also to have been influenced by anti-Semitic prejudice.⁸⁶ Welcker conceded that the Greeks had taken a lot from the Phoenicians at the material and technological level.⁸⁷ However, he placed emphasis on the distinction between the material and the spiritual sphere. He categorically rejected that there had been formative Phoenician influences on Greek religion and culture: 'The Greeks could not have learned what is needed to found a culture from that merchant people [the Phoenicians] . . . the flower of Greek culture and its fruits, to which that people have no known equal, must be in proportion to its roots, and the Aryan people [Stamm] is not inferior to the Semitic in spirit

⁸¹ Welcker (1857), p. 47.

⁸² '... wie sinnig und treffend das Griechische Volk die obersten Begriffe oder Haupteigenschaften seiner Götter aus sich selbst heraus in Namen ausgedrückt habe' Welcker (1857), p. 48. Names like Zeus, Kronos, Athene, Apollo, Artemis, Hermes, Here or Dionysos Welcker regarded as clearly Greek: Welcker (1857), p. 49.

⁸³ Humboldt to Welcker, Berlin, 15 December 1822, n. XXX, in R. Haym, *Wilhelm von Humboldt's Briefe an F.G. Welcker* (Berlin: Gaertner, 1859), pp. 75–9, Welcker to Humboldt, Bonn, 13 January 1823, n. XXXa, in Haym (1859), pp. 95–7, Welcker (1857), pp. 46–8, Henrichs (1986), pp. 204–5. Cf. B. Bravo, 'Dieu et les dieux chez F. Creuzer et F.G. Welcker', in Schmidt (1987), pp. 263–301 at p. 292.

⁸⁴ Welcker to Humboldt, Bonn, 13 January 1823, n. XXXa, in Haym (1859), p. 96.

⁸⁵ Welcker (1857), pp. 10, 116.

⁸⁶ Cf. 'Burkerts Kritik an den antisemitischen Tendenzen in der Altertumswissenschaft der zweiten Hälfte des 19 Jhs trifft auch Welcker'. Henrichs (1986), p. 205, n.111.

⁸⁷ Welcker (1857), p. 28.

and disposition.⁸⁸ In this respect, there is a stark contrast between him and his student, Ernst Curtius, who, as we shall see, championed the view that there had been a large Semitic component to Greek religion. The latter remarked of his teacher, that 'he still had too much of that jealousy with which the older humanists believed they had to protect the autochthony of the Greek divine figures to consider the cultural history of the peoples of the Mediterranean with full impartiality'.⁸⁹

In the *Griechische Götterlehre* Welcker put forward a comprehensive examination of Greek religion from its gods and heroes to such aspects as cultic practices, superstition and magic.⁹⁰ However, doing justice to its name, the *Griechische Götterlehre* placed by far the greatest emphasis on the gods,⁹¹ whose historical development from the earliest times onwards it sought to elucidate.⁹² It should be stressed that the focus on the gods reflected Welcker's own

⁸⁸ Welcker (1857), p. 117. In isolated cases such as those of Aphrodite or Melikertes, Welcker did in fact acknowledge Phoenician origins: Welcker (1857), pp. 28, 666. In suggesting that the Phoenicians had not influenced the Greeks at the level of culture, Welcker also referred to Mommsen's statement in his *History of Rome* 'Die Kraft der bildungsfähigen Völker, mit denen sie sich berührten, zu civilisiren und sich zu assimiliren, wie sie die Hellenen, auch die Italiker besaßen, fehlt gänzlich den Puniern. Selbst der staatsbildende Trieb ist in ihr Gemüth nicht so gepflanzt wie er überall bei den Indogermanen uns begegnet.' On the portrayal of the Phoenicians in nineteenth-century scholarship see Bernal (1987), pp. 337–64. An indicator of the persistence of such attitudes in scholarship is Wilamowitz's reference to 'the peoples and states of the Semites and the Egyptians which had been decaying for centuries and which, in spite of the antiquity of their culture, were unable to contribute anything to the Hellenes other than a few manual skills, costumes, and implements of bad taste, antiquated ornaments, repulsive fetishes for even more repulsive fake divinities' Wilamowitz (1884), p. 215, quoted in Burkert (1992), pp. 2–3. Later in his career Wilamowitz held that 'der hellenische cultus den Semiten unvergleichlich näher steht als den östlichen Ariern, und selbst in der heldensage fordern die Babylonier wahrlich eher zur vergleichung heraus als der Veda'. Wilamowitz (1895a), p. xii. On Wilamowitz's attitude towards Jews see R.L. Fowler, 'Blood for the Ghosts: Wilamowitz in Oxford', *Syllecta Classica* 20, 2009, pp. 171–213 at pp. 176–7.

⁸⁹ E. Curtius, 'Die Griechische Götterlehre vom geschichtlichen Standpunkt' (1875a), *Alterthum und Gegenwart. Gesammelte Reden und Vorträge*, vol. II (Berlin: Hertz, 1882), pp. 50–71 at pp. 51–2. Cf. Henrichs (1986), p. 208, n. 128.

⁹⁰ Cf. Kekulé (1880), pp. 356–9.

⁹¹ Henrichs (1986), pp. 187ff., 198.

⁹² Already in 1845 Welcker had written to Braun: 'Immer mehr gestalten sich meine Sachen zu einer Entwicklungsgeschichte, im Gegensatz einer bequemen classificirten Götterbeschreibung.' Welcker to Braun, Bonn, 6 June 1845, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Rom, Archiv. This was an aspect that Welcker took particular pride on. After the publication of the first volume he wrote to Henzen: 'Meine Mythologie [note that he refers to his *Götterlehre* as *Mythologie*] wird von den ersten Männern dieses Kreises in England, Deutschland, Frankreich äußerst gut

understanding of religion: in his eyes, the *Gottessinn* constituted *das Grundgefühl der Religion*.⁹³ As Henrichs observes, the term *Götterlehre* appeared in the eighteenth century as a German translation of *theologia*. Both in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, it was used in titles of works on Greek religion, though as we have seen, the term *Mythologie* was more conventional.⁹⁴ The most famous earlier *Götterlehre* (1791) was by K.P. Moritz (1756–93) which Welcker's father had read to him when he was a boy.⁹⁵ A *Griechische Götterlehre* by Welcker's colleague and friend, Emil Braun appeared a few years before Welcker's own in 1854. Welcker held that Braun had gotten the term from him and that he kept it for his own work.⁹⁶ Henrichs draws attention to a letter of 1822 by Humboldt to Welcker in which the former uses the expression *Griechische Götterlehre* and suggests that Welcker's choice of title reflects the influence of Humboldt.⁹⁷ In his review of Welcker's *Götterlehre* Preller maintained that Welcker called his work *Götterlehre* rather than *Mythologie* because it was concerned with those myths that were of the greatest importance for religion, especially of the oldest times, rather than myths which were later fabrications.⁹⁸ It should be noted, however, that both other contemporary scholars⁹⁹ and, as we saw, Welcker himself referred to his work interchangeably as *Mythologie/Götterlehre*.¹⁰⁰

aufgenommen, einstimmig als die erste klare Entwicklung der Griechischen Religionsideen in ihrem Zusammenhang. Daran hatte ich nie gedacht [sic].’ Welcker to Henzen, Bonn, 23 March 1858, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Rom, Archiv. In fact, as we shall see, reactions to Welcker's *Götterlehre* were very mixed. On the broader trend to approach Greek religion in terms of its historical development see Henrichs (1987), pp. 22–3.

⁹³ Welcker (1857), p. 218.

⁹⁴ Henrichs (1986), pp. 186–90.

⁹⁵ Welcker's autobiographical sketch from his *Nachlass* at the Library of the University of Bonn, p. 56.

⁹⁶ Welcker to Henzen, Bonn, 17 March 1857, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Rom, Archiv

⁹⁷ Henrichs (1986), pp. 189–90.

⁹⁸ L. Preller, 'Griechische Götterlehre von F.G. Welcker', *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie* 79, 1859, pp. 32–44 at p. 33. Cf. Welcker's distinction between *Urmythen* containing fundamental *Urerkenntnisse* such as the marriage of Heaven and Earth or the Titanomachy, and later myths: Welcker (1857), p. 76.

⁹⁹ Henrichs (1986), p. 187. In English, Max Müller referred to it as 'Welcker's Greek Mythology' or as 'The Science of the Greek Gods': Max Müller, *Greek Mythology* (1858a), pp. 144, 145.

¹⁰⁰ In addition to the letter to Henzen, in a letter to Gerhard Welcker referred to his *Götterlehre* as *Mythologie*: Welcker to Gerhard, Bonn, 1 February 1857, from Welcker's *Nachlass* at the Library of the University of Bonn. As we saw, Welcker also

II.I. The *Urwesen* Zeus

According to Welcker, 'if we go back to the remotest Greek antiquity, the greatest fact is the idea of God as the highest being, linked to a worship of nature, which never totally disappeared, but out of which early on a family of gods sprouting from Zeus began to form outside of nature.'¹⁰¹

The idea of God as the highest being was expressed by Zeus. Welcker argued that the name 'Zeus' derived from *theos*, which he regarded as cognate with 'heaven', and that it only gradually came to designate a particular god. Even then it could be used to designate not solely one god amongst others, but, doing justice to its etymology, 'God in general, Godhead' and, further, 'the eternal God of the heavens in contrast to everything made'.¹⁰² In addition, Welcker argued emphatically that the expression 'Zeus Kronion' provided crucial insight into the original conception of Zeus.¹⁰³ In his view, the name 'Kronion' did not originally designate Zeus as the son of Kronos, a personage whom he regarded as a later fabrication. Rather, Welcker maintained that the word *κρόνος* equalled *χρόνος* and that the epithet *Κρονίων*, therefore, had originally designated Zeus as the son of time. According to Welcker, that was a way to express that, unlike the other Greek gods, Zeus had been conceived as existent since all time. For Welcker, the formula Zeus Kronion suggested that Zeus had been conceived as 'the Kabbalists conceived El Olam the Ancient of Days . . . the Immemorial One, the God existing since all time, the God before and distinct from all things'.¹⁰⁴ Welcker's theory of Zeus Kronion drew on ancient philosophical conceptions of Zeus as well as on Aeschylus' representation of Zeus as a Supreme God—it is found in embryonic form already in his *Die Aeschylische Trilogie*.

held lectures under both names. However Welcker also stated that: 'Wenn unter Mythologie, wie gewöhnlich geschieht, die Lehre von den Göttern und göttlichen Wesen verstanden wird, so ist der Name eigentlich zu eng und andererseits zu weit, da man versucht seyn kann auch die Poesie von den Heroen, die hinsichtlich ihres Cults von der Götterlehre nicht ausgeschlossen werden können, hinzuziehen'. Welcker (1857), p. 125.

¹⁰¹ Welcker (1857), p. 129.

¹⁰² Welcker (1857), pp. 129–32.

¹⁰³ Welcker (1857), pp. 140ff.

¹⁰⁴ Welcker (1857), p. 142, cf. F.G. Welcker, *Griechische Götterlehre*, vol. III (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1863), p. xxvii.

Prometheus (1824).¹⁰⁵ Welcker's interpretation of Zeus Kronion further recalls Hölderlin's reference to Zeus Kronion as 'Sohn der Zeit' in *Natur und Kunst oder Saturn und Jupiter* as well as his reference to Zeus as 'Vater der Zeit' in *Antigone*.¹⁰⁶

In contrast to scholars like K.O. Müller or Preller who, as we shall see, argued for a monotheistic tendency in polytheism, Welcker held that a polytheistic tendency lay within monotheism.¹⁰⁷ The growth of Greek mythology worked to obscure the original conception of Zeus as an absolute deity. As mentioned, Welcker held that, like Jehovah, Zeus Kronion had been endowed with the attribute of transcendence. However, mythology gave Zeus a father, Kronos, and a wife, Hera. According to Welcker, Hera's name derived from *ἔρα* = earth and indicated that she was originally an Earth goddess. Through his marriage, Zeus was 'dragged down' into the affairs of nature, the result being a tense, unresolved coexistence between his transcendental and his immanent side. The view that there was a genuine religious content in Greek religion approximating modern notions of religion beyond, and in spite of, mythology appears recurrently in writings of the period. In this context, one may draw a comparison in particular between Welcker and Schleiermacher. According to the latter, 'when they [the Greeks] kept a fantastical chronicle of the lineages of these gods, or when a later faith presents us with a long chain of emanations and creations, then that is empty mythology. To regard all occurrences in the world as actions of a single God, that is religion.'¹⁰⁸ The distinction between religion and mythology may have contributed to Welcker's choice of the word *Götterlehre* rather than *Mythologie* for the title of his work,¹⁰⁹ though, as we mentioned he could use these terms interchangeably.

Kekulé aptly described the importance attached to Zeus as 'der Lebensnerv' of Welcker's *Griechische Götterlehre*.¹¹⁰ The significance

¹⁰⁵ Welcker (1857), pp. 142–3, F.G. Welcker, *Die Aeschylische Trilogie. Prometheus* (Darmstadt: Leske, 1824), pp. 95–6. On the long tendency in scholarship to see Aeschylus as 'striving' towards a monotheistic conception of Zeus see M.L. West, 'Towards Monotheism', in P. Athanassiadi and M. Frede (eds.), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), pp. 21–40 at p. 27.

¹⁰⁶ F. Beissner, *Hölderlins Götter* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1969), pp. 10–11.

¹⁰⁷ Welcker (1863), p. xiii. ¹⁰⁸ Schleiermacher (1799 [1999]), p. 214.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. M. Wegner, *Altertumskunde* (Freiburg/Munich: Alber, 1951), p. 190.

¹¹⁰ Kekulé (1880), p. 356. Cf. Kern's remark that 'man kann viele Abschnitte des ersten Bandes wohl als einen Hymnos auf Zeus bezeichnen'. O. Kern, *Die Religion der Griechen*, vol. III (Berlin: Weidmann, 1938), p. 295.

of Zeus for Welcker is further visible in his dismissal of the work of Forchhammer. According to Kekulé, Welcker 'expressed his contempt for Forchhammer's "system" with the words "he knows no Zeus"'¹¹¹ In his review of the *Griechische Götterlehre*, Max Müller stated: 'Nowhere . . . have we seen the original character of the worship of Zeus as the God, or as he is called in later times, as the Father of the Gods, as the God of Gods, drawn with so sure and powerful a hand as in Welcker's "Mythology"'. When we ascend with him to the most distant heights of Greek history, the idea of God, as the Supreme Being, stands before us as a simple fact.'¹¹² Nevertheless, Welcker's theory of Zeus Kronion also met with strong opposition. As we shall see, it was subjected to criticism from such different scholars as Preller, H.D. Müller, Nietzsche and Usener.¹¹³ Of particular interest is the debate conducted on the subject between Welcker and his esteemed colleague and friend, Ludwig Preller.¹¹⁴ In his review of the first volume of the *Griechische Götterlehre* in 1859 Preller singled out what he perceived as Welcker's advocacy of *Urmonotheismus* as the principal flaw of a work which he, otherwise, hailed as a masterpiece. He further suggested that there were parallels between Welcker's theory of Zeus Kronion and Schelling's theory of a qualified *Urmonotheismus*.¹¹⁵ The latter had argued in his *Philosophie der Mythologie* (1841) that while absolute or pure monotheism was the result of religious and philosophical development a relative form of monotheism entailing a vague premonition of a ruler of the world and of humankind formed the basis of all religion.¹¹⁶ Preller's criticism of Welcker and Schelling began with the point that the debate on

¹¹¹ Kekulé (1880), p. 356.

¹¹² Max Müller, 'Greek Mythology' (1858a), p. 148.

¹¹³ For negative reactions see Henrichs (1986), pp. 179–80, n. 2 and 3. J. Overbeck dedicated a whole treatise, the *Beiträge zur Erkenntnis und Kritik der Zeusreligion* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1861) to refuting Welcker's portrayal of Zeus.

¹¹⁴ Henrichs (1986), p. 195, n. 67, M. Espagne, 'Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker à Bonn. De la *Bildung* à l'Histoire des Religions', *Revue Germanique Internationale* 14, 2011a, pp. 41–54 at p. 50.

¹¹⁵ Preller (1859), p. 38.

¹¹⁶ A. Roser, H. Schulten, and W.E. Ehrhardt (eds.), *F.W.J. Schelling. Philosophie der Mythologie* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1996), 14th lecture 10. 2. 41, 15th lecture 11. 2. 41. Cf. H. Usener, *Götternamen* (Bonn: Cohen, 1896), p. 274, Wessels (2003), p. 86. On Schelling's interpretation of mythology see W.E. Ehrhardt, 'Einleitung', in Roser (1996), pp. 7–22, Graf (1993), pp. 31–2. Welcker had actually sharply criticized Schelling's *Philosophy of Mythology* in the preface to the first volume of his *Götterlehre* and emphatically distanced himself from Schelling's

Urmonotheismus was impaired by the ambiguity in the ways the term 'monotheism' was employed. Did one mean by 'monotheism', he asked, a religion like Judaism, which recognizes a single, 'supranatural' God? Or, also a religious system which recognizes 'indeed a Supreme God exalted by degrees, but also sets up many other gods alongside him, of higher and lower rank, and does not consider all these gods together to be supranatural?' In Preller's opinion, the use of the term in this second sense was misleading.¹¹⁷ In addition, Preller argued that the case Welcker made in support of an original *Monotheismus der Zeusreligion* was implausible in at least three respects. Firstly, he asserted that Welcker's portrayal of Zeus as having both a

standpoint: 'Daß auch ich auf einen absolut philosophischen Standpunkt in Behandlung der Mythologie mich nicht zu erheben vermag, sondern einen philosophisch historischen zu behaupten strebe, brauche ich kaum ausdrücklich zu bemerken. Offenbar hat Schelling . . . von neuem den Weg vieler alter Philosophen eingeschlagen, ihre eignen philosophischen Ideen ihr [Greek mythology] unterzulegen.' Welcker (1857), p. x, n. 7. He further stressed that Schelling attributed to the Greeks a consciousness 'von einer in der Gottheit selbst vorgegangenen Entwicklung, einem Fortschritt, wo ich nur einen durch den Mythus veranlaßte Rückschritt des Volks in seinem Bewußtseyn von der ewigen unendlichen Gottheit sehn kann'. Welcker (1857), p. 154. In his correspondence, Welcker also repeatedly expressed criticism of Schelling's views e.g. in his letters to Gerhard of 17 January 1845, or of 3 May 1856, from Welcker's *Nachlass* at the Library of the University of Bonn. On Welcker's criticism of Schelling see further B. Bravo, *Philologie, Histoire, Philosophie de l'Histoire* (Wrocław/Varsovie/Cracovie: Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1968), p. 103. As we shall see, Welcker's student Usener would continue his teacher's opposition to the influence of Schelling's philosophy on the study of religion. Max Müller, who had once attended Schelling's lectures expecting 'great things', provides a further example of a philologist being dismissive of Schelling's approach: 'On Schelling's *Philosophy of Mythology* . . . we hardly dare to pronounce an opinion. And yet, with all due respect for his great name, with a sincere appreciation of some deep thoughts on the subject of mythology—and more particularly with a full acknowledgment of his merits in having pointed out more strongly than anybody else the inevitable character of mythological thought and language in the widest sense of the word—we must say, as critics, that his facts and theories defy all rules of sound scholarship, and that his language is so profuse and vague, as to be unworthy of the century we live in. To any one who knows how powerful and important an influence Schelling's mind exercised on Germany at the beginning of this century, it is hard to say this.' Max Müller (1858a), p. 113, F. Max Müller, *The Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Friedrich Max Müller*, vol. I (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1902), pp. 23, 25. On Max Müller and Schelling see van den Bosch (2002), pp. 251–3, 258.

¹¹⁷ Preller (1859), pp. 34–5. The question of qualifying or distinguishing between different kinds of monotheism continues to preoccupy scholars. For different views and approaches see van Nuffelen (2010), p. 20, P. Athanassiadi and M. Frede, 'Introduction', in Athanassiadi/Frede (1999), pp. 1–20 at p. 2, Assmann (1993), pp. 10, 46.

transcendental and an immanent side resulted in an unconvincing ambiguity concerning his status. Secondly, he held that there was no evidence for the temporal and qualitative distinction which Welcker was seeking to draw between, on the one hand, the transcendental Zeus Kronion, standing at the origins of Greek religion and, on the other hand, the immanent Olympian gods, emerging at a later stage. Lastly, he rejected the theory that the mythic figure of Kronos was a late invention as required by Welcker's interpretation of Zeus' epithet Kronion.¹¹⁸ As we shall see, Preller argued that instead of making a case for a Greek *Urmonotheismus* one should recognize that Zeus was coeval with the other Olympians and that they all went back to the original form of Greek religion—in his view, an inevitably polytheistic *Naturreligion*.

In response to Preller's criticism, Welcker sought to clarify his position in the preface to the third volume of the *Griechische Götterlehre* (1863). Welcker emphasized that he did not hold the view that Greek polytheism was posterior to Zeus Kronion as Preller had taken him to suggest. His position was, rather, that Zeus Kronion and the *Naturdienst* out of which the Olympians eventually emerged had both been original constituent parts of Greek religion.¹¹⁹ Thus Welcker did not, in fact, argue for a pure Greek *Urmonotheismus* as he has often been taken to do. Although he acknowledged the existence of a *Naturdienst* alongside the worship of Zeus Kronion from the very beginning, Welcker vehemently rejected Preller's assertion that, in its original form, Greek religion had been a polytheistic *Naturreligion*. We have seen how in citing features common to the Greeks and the Germans, Welcker had associated the feeling for nature with the feeling for religion. He now stressed, however, that nature had given humans 'infinite subject matter and opportunity to exercise their intellect, but not the slightest to deduce or devise what derives of God in them'.¹²⁰ Welcker underscored that humankind's *sensus numinis* was innate. In so arguing, he drew on the work of W. von Humboldt. According to the latter, man gained consciousness of himself through language. Claiming to be the first to apply W. von Humboldt's views to the study of religion, Welcker suggested that there existed a direct link between man's consciousness of himself

¹¹⁸ Preller (1859), pp. 35–8.

¹²⁰ Welcker (1863), p. xxiv.

¹¹⁹ Welcker (1863), p. v.

and the *πρώτη θεοῦ ἔννοια*.¹²¹ 'The self-aware man who can sense soul in the world around him and who desires to know its origin,' he argued, 'always directs his gaze to the... heavens... and his eyes grasp always a whole rather than separate parts.'¹²² In support of this view, Welcker quoted W. von Humboldt's view that 'in the childhood of humankind, in the natural freshness of the mind, always a whole is felt'.¹²³ Taking the step from the notion of wholeness to monotheism, Welcker maintained that 'the innata notitia conceives earlier God than gods'.¹²⁴ To buttress his thesis, Welcker also cited missionary reports on the religions of 'primitive' peoples.¹²⁵ In this respect there is, as we shall see, an unlikely parallel between Welcker and one of his strongest critics, the later anthropological writer, A. Lang. We may note how Welcker sought to support the conventional thesis of (qualified) *Urmonotheismus* by employing arguments from the emerging disciplines of linguistics and anthropology which were laying claim to scientific status and by drawing on the venerable name of W. von Humboldt and his own close relationship with him. However, in a letter of 1822, Humboldt had stated to Welcker that he could not be 'convinced that the crude idea of a single God was the original idea of humankind, which only later became obscured and was lost'.¹²⁶

As the comparisons with Jehovah signal, Welcker invested Zeus Kronion with qualities such as existence since all time or transcendence, which recalled the conception of God in Judaism and Christianity. Henrichs has emphasized the 'christliches Erbgut' that lay behind Welcker's account of Zeus, citing Nietzsche's exclamation, 'How Christian, to maintain with Welcker that the Greeks were originally monotheists' (although as we saw this was not quite

¹²¹ Welcker (1863), pp. vff., xx. Cf. F.G. Welcker, 'Meine Griechische Götterlehre betreffend', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 13, 1858, pp. 605–38 at p. 617 and his view that 'So wenig aber die einzelnen Seelenkräfte im Bewußtseyn früher unterschieden werden als das des einen Geistes erwacht und geübt ist, so wenig läßt sich die erste Religion in ihrem Zug und ihren Aeusserungen sich polytheistisch denken'. Welcker (1858), pp. 617–18. On Welcker's defence of *Urmonotheismus* see Henrichs (1986), p. 208.

¹²² Welcker (1863), p. x.

¹²³ Welcker (1863), pp. x–xi, n.3.

¹²⁴ Welcker (1863), pp. x–xi.

¹²⁵ Welcker (1863), p. xiii.

¹²⁶ Humboldt to Welcker, Berlin, 15 December 1822, n. XXX, in Haym (1859), p. 72. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, vol. I (Berlin: Weidmann, 1931), p. 6. Bravo (1987), p. 292, Goldsmith (1986), p. 51, Henrichs (1986), p. 203.

Welcker's position).¹²⁷ Welcker's theory of Zeus Kronion indeed constitutes the most conspicuous example of an *interpretatio Judaeo-Christiana* of Zeus in nineteenth-century scholarship. It is notable that the next monumental study of Zeus in the history of the discipline, A.B. Cook's three-volume *Zeus* (1914–40) also emphasized the points of contact between the worship of Zeus and Christianity.¹²⁸ Lüders noted that Welcker's *Götterlehre* was pervaded by a vivid *Gottesinn*, deprived of which Welcker was loath to think of humankind, and that for that reason he 'abhorred the increasingly prominent atheism or materialism of David Friedrich Strauß, with whose works he had been greatly preoccupied in the last years'.¹²⁹ Welcker's *Götterlehre* highlights how the treatment of Greek religion in nineteenth-century scholarship could be intertwined with contemporary theological controversies: to Strauss' perceived attempt to cast God out of history, Welcker juxtaposed the theory of Zeus Kronion which was grounded on the notion of the innateness of the idea of God. Henrichs also suggests that Welcker's portrayal of Zeus as *Urgott* indicates his spiritual affinity to earlier nineteenth-century romantic scholars and, especially, Creuzer.¹³⁰ However, the differences between Creuzer's and Welcker's theses should also be noted—a theory of priestly diffusion of *Urweisheit* from the East as opposed to a theory of qualified universal *Urmonotheismus*.¹³¹

II.II. The Reform

As seen, Welcker held that, in addition to Zeus Kronion, a constituent part of Greek religion in its original form was a *Naturdienst*. In his

¹²⁷ Henrichs (1986), pp. 204, 212, A. Henrichs, '“Full of Gods”: Nietzsche on Greek Polytheism and Culture', in P. Bishop (ed.), *Nietzsche and Antiquity* (Rochester, NY/Woodbridge, UK: Camden, 2004), pp. 114–37 at p. 120.

¹²⁸ Schwabl (1991), pp. 237–8, Dowden (2006), p. 13.

¹²⁹ O. Lüders, 'Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker', *Im Neuen Reich* 11, 1881b, pp. 711–25 at p. 720. Cf. Kekulé (1880), pp. 442–4.

¹³⁰ Henrichs (1986), p. 211.

¹³¹ On the similarities and differences between Creuzer and Welcker see Henrichs (1986), pp. 209–18 and Bravo (1968), pp. 98–100. Bravo remarks: 'Nous pouvons constater à la fois des ressemblances et des différences significatives entre cette construction et celle de Creuzer. Le monothéisme primitif rappelle la science théologique que Creuzer attribuait aux peuples primordiaux; mais il n'est pas question, chez Welcker, de panthéisme, ni d'émanation, ni, d'autant moins, de connaissance discursive'. Bravo (1987), p. 296.

view, with the exception of Zeus, the Greek gods had originally been, like the gods of the 'barbarians', nature-gods.¹³² Recalling Forchhammer, Welcker emphasized that the ancients had not worshipped elements or phenomena of nature as such: 'One must be blind to believe that the ancient world had worshipped matter or mere phenomena, dead nature, as she appears to the analysing and critical spirit of the moderns . . . and not rather the life and divine Being that is invisibly effective from its inside.'¹³³ Lüders mentions that Rousseau and Schiller had been among Welcker's favourite writers and that his 'poetical temper had imbibed Rousseau's romantic feeling for nature'.¹³⁴ Welcker's descriptions of Greek land- and seascapes in his *Tagebuch einer Griechischen Reise* (1865) indeed suggest a romantic attitude towards nature.¹³⁵ Furthermore, in his eyes too, the ancient worship of nature evoked modern nature-poetry. In the context of discussing the worship of Helios, for example, he referred to 'beautiful' descriptions of the sun from Francis of Assisi or Milton to Goethe and Byron.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, one does not find in Welcker's *Götterlehre* that nostalgia for life in antiquity when humankind had supposedly lived in harmony with nature one encounters in the work of Forchhammer or Max Müller. Henrichs has called attention to the point that the antithesis between *Natur* and *Cultur* constitutes a leitmotiv in the work of Welcker.¹³⁷ This antithesis plays a key part in Welcker's account of the gradual retreat of the Greek *Naturdienst*. In his view, at some point in the remote past, long before the time of Homer, whom Welcker, despite his antiquity, regarded as a very young source for Greek religion, the Greeks started to do away with their *Naturdienst* and to advance in the direction of *Cultur*.¹³⁸ For all his admiration for Rousseau, Welcker celebrated this development. He maintained that 'with every step a people takes towards culture

¹³² Welcker (1857), pp. 214–15.

¹³³ Welcker (1857), p. 216.

¹³⁴ O. Lüders, 'Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker', *Im Neuen Reich* 11, 1881a, pp. 661–72 at p. 666.

¹³⁵ F.G. Welcker, *Tagebuch einer Griechischen Reise* (Berlin: Hertz, 1865). As Kern noted, revealing his own attraction to southern landscapes, Welcker's journal showed 'wie fähig er noch war, die erhabene Schönheit der griechischen und kleinasiatischen Landschaft voll zu empfinden' Kern (1938), p. 295.

¹³⁶ Welcker (1857), p. 401.

¹³⁷ Henrichs (1986), p. 195.

¹³⁸ Welcker (1857), p. 6. Henrichs (1987), p. 16. In taking the view that Homer was a 'young' source as regards Greek religion, Welcker was reacting to advocates of the 'literary-critical' approach and, especially Voss, for whom Greek religion essentially began with Homer: Kekulé (1880), p. 446, Henrichs (1986), p. 196, n. 70.

they weaken the childlike mind from which *Naturreligion* sprang... and instead bring forth a whole new world beside the natural one, which is ultimately transformed, through physics, mechanical sciences and chemistry, into the object of scientific study'.¹³⁹ As for earlier critics of elemental interpretations, for him too nature-worship was redolent of mysticism.¹⁴⁰ With the progress of Greek civilization, the Greek 'sense of the divine' started to be under the command of reason. A momentous change occurred in the way the Greek gods were conceived, resulting in the emergence of the new *Götterlehre*. Through a long process of reform the deities of the original *Naturdienst* were transformed into the Olympian gods, 'in persons of specific, idealized human qualities and peculiarities'.¹⁴¹ The change found expression in the *Urmythos* of the fight of the Olympian gods against the Titans. Welcker hailed the emerging Olympian order which represented the victory of the spiritual over the material as one of the greatest and most quintessentially Greek intellectual achievements.¹⁴² In this context, one may draw a comparison with Hegel, according to whom the Greeks expressed 'their consciousness of the subordination of natural forces to the spiritual through the notion that Zeus established the rule of the spiritual gods and defeated and dethroned the power of nature through war'. For Hegel, the fact that the Greeks 'raised the spiritual principle to dominance and defeated the natural was their essential accomplishment'.¹⁴³ Recalling W. von Humboldt's and, ultimately, Winckelmann's, idealizing perspectives, Welcker underscored that the Olympian gods represented an ideal view of human nature.¹⁴⁴ In this context, he drew attention to the role of art. Through its ideal representation of the divine, Greek art 'revealed' the gods to human-kind.¹⁴⁵ However, Welcker strongly argued against the view that Greek religion was 'a religion of beauty', which, as he noted, had gained

¹³⁹ Welcker (1857), p. 218.

¹⁴⁰ E.g. Welcker (1857), p. 548.

¹⁴¹ Welcker (1857), p. 230.

¹⁴² Welcker (1857), pp. 231, 529.

¹⁴³ Hegel (1969), p. 103.

¹⁴⁴ Henrichs (1986), p. 199. Henrichs (1987), p. 14. According to Lüders, 'Idealität' was the main feature of Welcker's personality: Lüders (1881b), p. 725, cited in Henrichs (1986), p. 199.

¹⁴⁵ Welcker (1859), p. 107. Welcker cited Winckelmann: 'den Weg zum Göttlichen durch die Kunst kannten im Altertum nur die Griechen': Welcker (1859), p. 107. For Welcker, it was especially in Phidias' work that one could perceive 'die Hellenische vergeistigende, vergöttlichende Umgestaltung der Götter in sichtbarer Erscheinung'. Welcker (1859), p. 104. Cf. Kekulé (1880), p. 374.

currency through the writings of Hegel, Goethe or Schlegel. In his eyes, this view failed to do justice to Greek religion as a true religion.¹⁴⁶ He stressed that to the Greeks the ideal images of the gods were not merely a source of aesthetic pleasure, but that they had also approached them in a genuinely religious mood.¹⁴⁷

It is notable that Welcker's stress on the ideality of the Greek gods affected his stance on the question of their relationship to nature. He maintained that purely ideal gods such as the Greek gods of historical times could never have arisen from stimuli from the natural world. In his view, the human tendency towards the ideal entailed the sense for the beautiful and the sublime which was innate.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, both with respect to the question of the origins of the *sensus numinis* and of the ideal conception of the Greek gods, there was an effort on the part of Welcker to dissociate the divine from the realm of nature. As we shall see, this did not prevent him from advancing a largely physical interpretation of the Greek gods. Nevertheless, the fact that Welcker regarded physical interpretations as ill cohering with the innateness of the *sensus numinis* and the tendency to idealization sheds light on two further issues, besides the association with mysticism, which lay behind the opposition to physical interpretations in nineteenth-century scholarship.

There is, further, a strongly Christian background to Welcker's celebration of the transformation of the Greek gods from nature-deities into personal, anthropomorphic gods. According to Welcker, one of the most striking developments brought about by the new *Götterlehre* was the reinforcement of unity in the divine world: Zeus and the old nature-gods, he argued, had in many respects been kept separated. However, a parental relation was established between Zeus and the new anthropomorphic gods which strengthened the notion of the unity of the divine.¹⁴⁹ Thus, Apollo and Artemis, who as *Naturgeister*, Welcker maintained, often had distinct cult-places, were now brought together as the twin son and daughter of Zeus.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Welcker (1859), pp. 118–20. W.F. Otto would likewise state: 'Wegen der augenfälligen Schönheit der Göttergestalten glaubte man von einer 'Kunstreligion' reden zu dürfen, also von einer Religion, die eigentlich gar keine war.' Otto (1956), p. 8.

¹⁴⁷ Welcker (1859), p. 107.

¹⁴⁸ Welcker (1857), p. 233.

¹⁴⁹ Welcker (1857), p. 238.

¹⁵⁰ Welcker (1857), pp. 511ff. For an examination of the familial relations among the gods in modern scholarship see Burkert (2011), pp. 333–8. Cf. Bremmer (2010), p. 15.

Athena emerged out of Zeus as had, according to Philon, Logos out of God. Welcker depicted her as an emanation of his being, a pure image of Zeus.¹⁵¹ In addition, gods believed to have come to Greece from abroad such as Ares, Dionysos or Aphrodite were incorporated into the Greek divine world as children of Zeus.¹⁵² Welcker stressed that in this manner the monotheistic tendency which had been present in Greek religion from its origins was reaffirmed.

In a section bearing the revealing title 'Comparisons with Christianity', Welcker further stressed that in the emergence of anthropomorphic personal gods in Greece one could discern an anticipation of, or a prelude to Christianity.¹⁵³ Thus, he asserted that the anthropomorphic gods played a role of mediation between Zeus and the Greek worshippers that was parallel to Christ's mediation between God and humans.¹⁵⁴ In addition, Welcker placed emphasis on the point that, like the Christian God, the Greek gods were objects of faith.¹⁵⁵ This marked another important difference with W. von Humboldt, who, as we have seen, argued that in antiquity '*religion exercised no control over faith and attitudes*, but was limited to ceremonies'.¹⁵⁶ As Henrichs observes, Welcker's focus on the faith of the Greeks was a reflection of his own Protestant view of faith.¹⁵⁷ The importance of the confessional aspect comes out clearly in Welcker's statement that 'It is a false claim of some of the little

¹⁵¹ Welcker (1857), pp. 301–2. As we shall see, the same aspect is emphasized in another heavily Christianizing portrayal of Greek religion in contemporary scholarship, Nägelsbach's *Die Homerische Theologie in ihrem Zusammenhange dargestellt* (Nürnberg: Stein, 1840).

¹⁵² Welcker (1857), p. 239.

¹⁵³ Welcker (1857), p. 255. In the conclusion of his largely contemporaneous three-volume study of Greek religion, Maury likewise stated, 'Le polythéisme hellénique fut, à certains égards, une préparation, une introduction à la religion sortie de l'Évangile.' L.F.A. Maury, *Histoire des Religions de la Grèce Antique*, vol. III (Paris: Ladrangé, 1859), p. 481. As Sineux notes, more than a century later, A.J. Festugière would argue that the Greek religious ideal prepared the way for the message of the Gospel: P. Sineux, *Qu'est-ce qu'un dieu grec?* (Paris: Klincksieck, 2006), p. 34.

¹⁵⁴ Welcker (1857), p. 256. Welcker confessed that 'die Idee der Gottheit Christi hat . . . niemals Wurzel in mir gefasst, so viel Gefühl ich auch für die Evangelien hatte' which may have facilitated the drawing of this comparison: Kekulé (1880), pp. 26–7.

¹⁵⁵ Welcker (1857), pp. 79ff.

¹⁵⁶ W. von Humboldt, 'Über das Studium des Alterthums und des griechischen insbesondre' (1793), in Flitner/Giel II (2010), pp. 1–24 at p. 18.

¹⁵⁷ 'Nicht das Wissen, gnostisch oder kritisch, macht das Christenthum aus, sondern Gottesglaube, Gesinnung und Thun, Seyn und Leben.' Welcker (1857), p. 259, Henrichs (1987), p. 13. Cf. Bravo (1987), p. 288.

apostolic modern French apostles that only since Christianity the word belief had acquired significance'.¹⁵⁸ In his eyes, in their effort to extol Christianity, they did not do justice to Greek religion. In a passage that sheds light on the theological uneasiness surrounding the issue, Welcker felt compelled to argue that 'even the dogma that Christian belief is caused by the Holy Spirit does not exclude belief as a companion of all religion'.¹⁵⁹ He emphasized that 'antiquity furthered the belief in the gods not less than Paul in Christ and his resurrection, or the Gospel of John in the Word'.¹⁶⁰ If the Greek faith in the Olympian gods, however genuine, appeared misguided to modern eyes, Welcker asserted that the Greeks had also believed in 'a living, almighty God and his justice',¹⁶¹ like the Christians. A letter of Preller to Welcker further shows how the question of faith in Greek religion was affected by confessional perspective. Preller wrote to Welcker that Roman religion appeared less appealing in his eyes than the religion of the Greeks since it was 'essentially the Roman Catholic one: a lot of priesthood and *opus operatum*, a lot of theology and little faith, a lot of wood and little sap'.¹⁶²

II.III. The Greek Gods between *Natur* and *Cultur*: The Case of Apollo

As we mentioned, Welcker hailed the progress of the Greek gods from nature-deities into personal gods as a momentous development. However, the victory of the new order over the old was not absolute. Traces of the ancient *Naturdienst* survived in the case of deities like Helios and Selene and even in the case of the major gods. Welcker maintained that this was a common phenomenon in periods of religious transition. In a tone at once apologetic and combative, he argued that in places like Greece, Scandinavia or Germany, pagan

¹⁵⁸ Welcker (1857), p. 82.

¹⁵⁹ Welcker (1857), p. 82.

¹⁶⁰ Welcker (1857), p. 83.

¹⁶¹ Welcker (1857), p. 82.

¹⁶² Preller to Welcker, 16 April 1855, quoted in Kekulé (1880), p. 423. On the long tradition of Protestant equation of the 'ritualistic' Roman religion with Roman Catholicism see Martínez Maza (2010), Phillips (2007), p. 18. On the portrayal of Roman religion as ritualistic in German scholarship from Hartung to Wissowa see A. Bendlin, 'Looking Beyond the Civic Compromise: Religious Pluralism in Late Republican Rome', in E. Bispham and C. Smith (eds.), *Religion in Archaic and Republican Rome and Italy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 115–35.

customs had survived the advent of, and even became incorporated into, Christianity.¹⁶³

On the question of how much of their original association with nature the major Greek gods retained in historical times, Welcker was equivocal. On the one hand, he maintained that 'Apollon, Artemis, Here, Athene had to renounce their physical origins to protect their new status, the ethical significance'. On the other hand, he suggested that one could frequently observe the accommodation of the new within the old in the case of major religious transitions.¹⁶⁴

According to Welcker, the physical heritage of the major Greek gods was most clearly visible in the case of Apollo. Apollo's relation to Helios, he noted, had for long been a special object of concern for German 'Forschungslust und Disputirsucht'.¹⁶⁵ Welcker argued against Voss and K.O. Müller that the identification of Apollo with Helios from the classical period onwards was hardly conceivable if the two deities had not been associated earlier.¹⁶⁶ He brought together a broad spectrum of evidence ranging from Apolline epithets, rituals and functions to Apollo's representation in the arts, which, in his view, indicated an original connection between Apollo and Helios. Thus he suggested that the name 'Apollon' had originally been an epithet of Helios. In his opinion, it derived from the verb ἀπέλλειν and it had originally an apotropaic sense designating Helios as 'der Abwehrer'.¹⁶⁷ In the course of time, the name 'Apollon' as well as the rites of expiation originally addressed to Helios in his apotropaic capacity were transferred to the son of Leto. The Athenian festival of the Thargelia offered an example of the transfer of the old Helios worship to Apollo. According to Welcker, its name derived from θέρπειν and ἥλιος and, therefore, indicated that the festival had originally been dedicated to Helios.¹⁶⁸ Its original association with the sun was preserved in the sacrifices to Helios and the Hours. In the same way, Welcker explained the presence of apparent solar rituals in other Apolline festivals such as the Pyanepsia and the Daphnephoria. He maintained that 'the customs remained even when the festival was dedicated to another god, at last even to a mortal as in the case of the

¹⁶³ Welcker (1857), pp. 242–3. The theme of 'pagan' influences on Christianity would be a major interest of Welcker's student, Usener: Henrichs (1986), pp. 226–7.

¹⁶⁴ Welcker (1857), p. 243.

¹⁶⁵ Welcker (1857), p. 544.

¹⁶⁶ Welcker (1857), p. 547.

¹⁶⁷ Welcker (1857), pp. 458–61.

¹⁶⁸ Welcker (1857), pp. 462–4.

dedication of the *Heraea* to Lysander'.¹⁶⁹ As we shall see, the notion of ritual- and festival-transfer would play a major role in Harrison's *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (1903).

In addition to rituals, Welcker argued that the original association between Helios and Apollo was discernible in epithets given to Apollo in local cults like *Αἰγλήτης*, *Φαναῖος*, or *Τιλφούσσιος*. In his view, the etymology of all of them indicated a connection to light.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, Welcker held that Apollo's association with Helios was reflected in some of his functions. In this context, he placed special emphasis on the ordering of time. According to Welcker, several pieces of evidence suggested that Apollo had inherited this function from the Sun. Thus he called attention to the sacrifices to Helios and the Hours in the aforementioned Apolline festivals. He further maintained that the epithet *Ὠρομέδων* given to Apollo in Tenos designated him as 'lord of the Hours'. Moreover, drawing on his knowledge of Greek art, he called attention to the point that Apollo was frequently represented in the company of the Hours in vase-paintings and coins.¹⁷¹

It, therefore, emerges that Apollo's alleged solar origins retained for Welcker considerable explanatory power for certain aspects of the historical Apollo. However, the more he moved into examining Apollo in historical times, the more they receded into the background. In his work, they appeared essentially as a burden of the past which the Greeks sought to emancipate Apollo from rather than as the key to his supposed essence, which, as we shall see, is how they were treated by scholars like Preller or Roscher.

Traces of an original *Naturbedeutung* are also visible in Welcker's account of the other major Greek gods. To take the case of Hera as an example, Welcker held, as mentioned, that her name derived from *ἔρα* = earth and argued that she had therefore originally been an Earth goddess.¹⁷² On the one hand, he maintained that as Queen of Olympus Hera had to appear completely detached from nature as the substratum of her person. On the other hand, what Welcker regarded as the central feature of Hera's worship, namely, her marriage to Zeus, was, in his eyes, never wholly divested of its alleged original symbolism, the union of Heaven and Earth.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Welcker (1857), p. 463.

¹⁷⁰ Welcker (1857), pp. 465ff.

¹⁷¹ Welcker (1857), pp. 466–9.

¹⁷² Welcker (1857), p. 363.

¹⁷³ Welcker (1857), pp. 362, 364.

Welcker put forward a dynamic conception of the Greek gods which focused on, and celebrated, their progress from the natural to the ethical and the intellectual sphere. As he stated, 'the concerns of urban life and its wonderfully advancing civilization, the spiritual, ethical, political, gain the upper hand over the rural and the first needs.'¹⁷⁴ However, that process was never entirely completed. If the gods' *Hauptwirksamkeit* eventually ceased to focus on the natural world, their physical origins continued to cast a long shadow over them in historical times. To this extent, Welcker's work can be seen as loosely belonging to the tradition of physical interpretation.

Placing at the origins of Greek religion both a single, Supreme God, Zeus Kronion, and a polytheistic *Naturdienst*, emphasizing the transition of the Greek gods from nature-deities into personal gods and yet largely retaining a model of physical interpretation, Welcker's *Griechische Götterlehre* is a unique work in the context of nineteenth-century scholarship: a work rife with tensions that offers insight into the wider stakes involved in nineteenth-century debates over *Urmonotheismus* and over whether the Greek gods were to be viewed as physical or ethical.

Henrichs noted that in part owing to its appearance at a late stage in Welcker's career, the *Griechische Götterlehre* had a limited impact.¹⁷⁵ There can be little doubt that Welcker's great work did not have a course-altering impact on the discipline. His closest disciple, Konrad Schwenck (1793–1864),¹⁷⁶ died before his teacher, and his own *Mythologie der Griechen* (1843) was not influential. The future in the study of Greek religion was to belong to comparative approaches, in the short term to Indo-European Comparative Mythology and later to anthropology. However, this should not obscure the fact that although Welcker's *Götterlehre* did not meet with such an enthusiastic reception as Welcker claimed in his letter to Henzen, his views commanded great respect even if not assent. This is most evident in the case of his account of Zeus. As will be seen, it became virtually impossible to discuss Zeus or the question of Greek monotheism during the second half of the nineteenth century and even later without reference to Welcker. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Farnell would still undertake to show that the etymology on

¹⁷⁴ Welcker (1859), p. 6.

¹⁷⁵ Henrichs (1986), pp. 181, 223ff.

¹⁷⁶ Welcker (1863), p. iii.

which Welcker's interpretation of Zeus Kronion rested was untenable. Even later Nilsson would argue in the opening pages of his *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion* that Welcker was 'with his assumption of an original *Zeusmonotheismus*, which has been so much rejected, right to this extent, that Zeus occupies in Homeric poetry a more dominating position than later'.¹⁷⁷ More than a century after the appearance of Welcker's *Götterlehre* Kerényi also looked back to its portrayal of Zeus. In the first chapter of his study of Zeus and Hera, he stated: 'The proposition with which Welcker in his *Götterlehre* begins to speak about Zeus may well stand in the beginning of a scholarly account: at the remotest limits of Greek antiquity we are confronted with the words *θεός* and *δαίμων* and the names *Ζεύς* and *Κρονίων*: in Greek religion there is nothing more ancient for us'.¹⁷⁸ For Kerényi, as for Welcker, Zeus' name offered insight into his essence. In Kerényi's view, the two key elements it contained were 'the experience of light and the modality of that experience'.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, Kerényi vindicated Welcker's focus on Zeus' epithet Kronion which he re-interpreted in the context of his own account of Zeus: 'Welcker placed next to Zeus, *theos* and *daimon* also the name *Kronion*, a patronymic—"son of Kronos". He was right to the extent that this succession, the connection with a new epoch after Kronos, was characteristic for Zeus. Through the original content of his name, the illuminating, Zeus was associated by the Greeks not with the beginning of the world, but with the time, of which they themselves had historical consciousness, a "new" time, opposed to an "old" which was not yet ruled by Zeus'.¹⁸⁰ In the spirit of Welcker, Kerényi further underlined that 'it is not in question that Greek religion was chiefly the religion of Zeus and not in question, that the religion of Zeus was the religion which is characteristic for the Greeks'.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ M.P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion*, vol. I (Munich: Beck, 1941), p. 4. He later reiterated 'Aus der Vorzeit lagen in der Zeus-Vorstellung fruchtbare Keime, die dem Gott eine überragende Stellung verleihen konnten und in gewisser Hinsicht auch verliehen haben. Welcker war mit seinem anfänglichen *Zeusmonotheismus* nicht so sehr im Unrecht, wie die Späteren, die auf den Polytheismus ihre Aufmerksamkeit richteten, gemeint haben'. Nilsson (1941), p. 394. On Nilsson's account of Zeus see Bremmer (2010), pp. 13–14.

¹⁷⁸ K. Kerényi, *Zeus und Hera. Urbild des Vaters, des Gatten und der Frau* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), p. 12.

¹⁷⁹ Kerényi (1972), p. 16.

¹⁸⁰ Kerényi (1972), p. 19.

¹⁸¹ Kerényi (1972), p. 21. For a discussion of Kerényi's view of Zeus as well as of other twentieth-century scholars from Otto to Burkert see Dowden (2006), pp. 14–16.

Welcker's argumentation in support of the view that traces of the gods' original *Naturbedeutungen* were still visible in the worship of the gods in historical times was also to cast a long shadow on the discipline. It made him one of the principal interlocutors of both advocates and critics of physical interpretations for half a century—from Preller and Roscher to Lang and Frazer.

What is more, as Henrichs points out, Usener, a student of Welcker at Bonn, as well as Wilamowitz felt Welcker's influence in different ways.¹⁸² In his *Götternamen*, Usener said of Welcker that he was the one 'who had penetrated more deeply than any other in the understanding of Greek religion, who is the teacher of us all, even of those who do not know it'.¹⁸³ The importance attached to the etymological analysis of divine names is one of the themes common to the work of both scholars.¹⁸⁴ However, on the key issue of *Urmonotheismus*, Usener, as we shall see, would become one of Welcker's most vocal critics.

Although Welcker had been too old for Wilamowitz to actually study with him, Wilamowitz revered him as one of his greatest teachers: 'He was the teacher who showed me the way to the soul of the Hellenes.'¹⁸⁵ Like Usener, Wilamowitz would not follow Welcker on the question of *Urmonotheismus*.¹⁸⁶ Nevertheless, as Henrichs

¹⁸² Henrichs (1986), pp. 223ff., who also discusses his influence on Bernays.

¹⁸³ Usener (1896), p. 273.

¹⁸⁴ Henrichs (1986), pp. 224–5, M. Espagne, 'Hermann Usener und die Bonner Schule der Philologie', in M. Espagne and P. Rabault-Ferhahn (eds.), *Hermann Usener und die Metamorphosen der Philologie*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011b), pp. 25–42 at pp. 27–8. For a broader comparison of Welcker and Usener see Espagne (2011b), pp. 27–8. As mentioned, Usener also followed Welcker in opposing Schelling's philosophical approach to the study of religion.

¹⁸⁵ U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Sappho und Simonides: Untersuchungen über Griechische Lyriker* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1913), p. 16 quoted in W.M. Calder III, 'Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff: An Unpublished Latin Autobiography', in W.M. Calder III, *Studies in the Modern History of Classical Scholarship* (Napoli: Jovene, 1984), pp. 147–64 at p. 156, n. 52. Cf. his statement in his Latin autobiography: 'E philologis Welckerum amare sponte coepi, sequi constitui statim, et veneror multumque feci ut alii venerarentur.' Calder (1984), p. 156. In his *Memoirs*, Wilamowitz stated: 'ich habe ziemlich alles was er [Welcker] geschrieben hat, in den Jahren meiner Ausbildung eifrig gelesen und so begriffen, daß es galt, sich ein Vollbild des ganzen hellenischen Wesens zu erwerben, wenn das Einzelne ganz verstanden werden soll.' U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Erinnerungen 1848–1914* (Leipzig: Koehler, 1928, second edition), p. 89. Cf. Calder's point that 'what especially appealed to Wilamowitz in Welcker was his «Gefühl für die Totalität»': Calder (1984), p. 156, n. 52. Henrichs (1986), p. 224.

¹⁸⁶ Henrichs (1986), p. 204.

observes, in its focus on the gods and its emphasis on faith Wilamowitz's own late work, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, strongly recalls Welcker's *Griechische Götterlehre*.¹⁸⁷ Wilamowitz himself stated, 'I am conscious of walking into [the footsteps of Welcker] wherever I talk about Hellenic gods or poets.'¹⁸⁸ In his *Geschichte der Philologie* Wilamowitz described Welcker's experience of the Greek gods upon visiting Greece thus: 'the man . . . sensed the proximity of the gods as at last he stood on the soil which had created them. Here they were no symbols or abstractions, here they were living gods.'¹⁸⁹ One feels that here Wilamowitz spoke as much about his own view of the gods as about Welcker's. Certainly Wilamowitz claimed to have sensed the divine while visiting Greek sanctuaries.¹⁹⁰

Less well-remembered by posterity, but hardly less famous in the nineteenth century was another student of Welcker, E. Curtius. As we shall see, he shared with his teacher a heavily Christianizing view of Greek religion.

In his examination of Welcker's *Griechische Götterlehre* Henrichs raised 'the embarrassing question, whether there is anything we can learn from his *Götterlehre* which could lead to a better understanding of the Greek gods'.¹⁹¹ Henrichs suggested that the prevalence of 'objective' approaches in the study of Greek religion from the late nineteenth century onwards has made engaging with Welcker's *Götterlehre* 'more necessary today than ever before. It opens up to everyone who is concerned with Greek religion a necessarily subjectively coloured "Innenperspektive"'.¹⁹² With the exception of scholars like Wilamowitz, twentieth-century students of Greek religion largely refrained from questions of 'Innenperspektive'—in part as a reaction to the projection of Christian notions and sentiments by previous scholars like Welcker. Yet this need not discredit the posing of the question itself.

Furthermore, the *Götterlehre* contains stimulating observations on various topics. For example, the points which Welcker made concerning the familial relations between the Greek gods and the tendency of the Greeks to equate foreign gods with their own call

¹⁸⁷ Henrichs (1986), p. 228, Henrichs (1987), p. 14.

¹⁸⁸ Wilamowitz (1913), p. 16 quoted in Calder (1984), p. 156, n. 52.

¹⁸⁹ Wilamowitz (1998), p. 57.

¹⁹⁰ Wilamowitz (1895a), p. viii.

¹⁹¹ Henrichs (1986), p. 181.

¹⁹² Henrichs (1986), pp. 228–9.

attention to aspects that are surely relevant to any discussion of the question of 'unity' in the Greek conception of the divine.

Above all, we may profit from the scope of Welcker's approach to Greek religion.¹⁹³ As we saw, Welcker considered both mythic and cultic aspects and examined a wide range of sources, including coinage, reliefs and vase-painting, in addition to literary evidence. His focus was on the individual gods, but he also paid attention to the various familial relations and groupings that obtained among them. What is more, he sought to trace the development of the conception of the Greek gods in relation to cultural and social changes. As Wilamowitz emphasized, 'Welcker's greatness as a scholar of religion lies not in his results, but in the way in which he studies, in the awareness that the religion of a people cannot be grasped, if one does not survey its entire life in depth and breadth and [here one may not necessarily wish to stay company with Wilamowitz] in the love with which he lives into the foreign faith.'¹⁹⁴

III. POLYTHEISM AND *NATURRELIGION*: LUDWIG PRELLER'S ACCOUNT OF GREEK RELIGION

Ludwig Preller (1809–61), in the judgment of Welcker, 'the most excellent of all our many mythologists',¹⁹⁵ was the author of one of the most widely read handbooks in the second half of the nineteenth century, the *Griechische Mythologie* (first edition, 1854, fourth edition, 1887). Preller stands out as a critic of Greek *Urmonotheismus* as well as one of the most extreme advocates of physical interpretation.

Preller was born in Hamburg in 1809 in an affluent merchant family. He began his studies in theology and philology at Leipzig in 1828 where he studied with G. Hermann. In 1829, he moved to Berlin. He there studied with Böckh and also attended Schleiermacher's lectures. Though Preller opted for philology over theology, he

¹⁹³ On the *Totalität* of Welcker's approach to Greek religion see Kekulé (1880), p. 359, Henrichs (1986), pp. 194, 224, Köhnken (1990), p. 100.

¹⁹⁴ U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 'Zeus', in F. Saxl (ed.), *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg 1923–1924* (Berlin: Teubner, 1926), pp. 1–16 at p. 15.

¹⁹⁵ Welcker to Henzen, Bonn, 20 August 1854, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Rom, Archiv.

remained interested in the latter throughout his life. In the last year of his studies, Preller attended the seminars of K.O. Müller at Göttingen where he obtained his doctorate (1832). Preller began his academic career as *Privatdocent* in Kiel in 1833 where he was a colleague of Forchhammer. In 1838, he became professor at the University of Dorpat and in 1846 at Jena. In the following year, however, he gave up his academic career and assumed the position of *Oberbibliothekar* in Weimar.¹⁹⁶ He died in 1861 shortly after the completion of the second edition of his *Griechische Mythologie*.

Preller's writings on Greek religion consist of his *Demeter und Persephone* (1837) and *Griechische Mythologie* (1854) as well as of several articles and encyclopaedic entries. In his first major work, *Demeter und Persephone*, Preller had attached himself primarily to the tradition of Voss and Lobeck who tended to regard Greek mythology as essentially a creation of poetry and especially of epic.¹⁹⁷ In the beginning of his *Griechische Mythologie* Preller set out an overview of the state of the study of Greek religion in the first half of the nineteenth century, which sheds light on how he perceived his position in the context of contemporary scholarship at the time of his maturity. Preller had words of praise for the contribution of the leading scholars of the period such as his teacher, K.O. Müller, and Welcker, to whom he would dedicate the second edition of his *Mythologie* in 1860. However, in his *Griechische Mythologie* he refrained from explicitly associating himself with any of the approaches then current in scholarship. He highlighted the lack of a reliable interpretive tradition in the field and asserted that he had found himself compelled 'to construct a lot, indeed the most' on his own.¹⁹⁸ One of the recent developments which, in his view, had opened up new possibilities for the understanding of Greek myths was the fact that from the second quarter of the nineteenth century

¹⁹⁶ For the biographical information on Preller I draw on G.T. Stichling, *Ludwig Preller. Eine Gedächtnißrede in der Freimaurerloge Amalia zu Weimar gehalten* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1863) and A. Baumeister, 'Preller, Ludwig', in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 26 (Leipzig, 1888), pp. 561–6.

¹⁹⁷ L. Preller, *Demeter und Persephone. Ein Cyclus mythologischer Untersuchungen* (Hamburg: Perthes, 1837), p. iv. On Preller's *Demeter und Persephone* see Borgeaud (1999), pp. 59–63, who discusses its significance for Bachofen, and Humphreys (2004), pp. 216–17.

¹⁹⁸ Preller (1854), p. iii.

onwards, Greece had 'again become a well-known and well-travelled land'.¹⁹⁹ As a result, Preller maintained that 'Greek nature, the first and original source of so many myths and visual narratives came up in its vivid singularity'.²⁰⁰ One notes the assumption that Greek nature was a major source of Greek mythology and how it was reinforced by first-hand acquaintance with Greece. Preller visited Greece in 1852 and his claim to originality in the *Griechische Mythologie* was based to a large extent on his autopsy of Greek nature. As we have seen, Preller credited Forchhammer with championing the importance of *Naturanschauung* for the study of Greek religion.²⁰¹ Despite this tribute to his former colleague at Kiel, however, Preller regarded Forchhammer's work as marred by exaggeration.

III.I. Elements of Monotheism in Greek Religion

In his overview of the state of the study of Greek religion, Preller mentioned that the 'dogma of a monotheistic *Urreligion*' was particularly influential in German scholarship. According to that 'dogma', primordial wisdom had been communicated to the Greeks from the East.²⁰² As we saw in the context of his debate with Welcker, Preller's fundamental assumption was that Greek religion was a *Naturreligion*. In his view, in *Naturreligionen* 'the elemental forces and occurrences of Nature [such as sunshine, rain, lightning etc.] were imagined as either the actions or changing conditions of animate beings'.²⁰³ As the divine was not conceived as transcendental, but rather as immanent in nature with its plethora of divisions, Preller regarded polytheism as an inherent 'weakness' of *Naturreligionen*.²⁰⁴ In advancing this view, Preller was also reacting against the theory of his teacher,

¹⁹⁹ Preller (1854), p. 23. Cf. Friedländer (1887), p. 92.

²⁰⁰ Preller (1854), p. 23. Preller also noted the profusion of studies of art-monuments: *ibid.*

²⁰¹ Preller (1854), p. 23.

²⁰² Preller (1854), p. 21. Cf. his reference to the 'very considerable influence' of the dogma of an *Urreligion* and of an *Urvolk*: Preller (1848a), p. 352.

²⁰³ Preller (1854), p. 1. Cf. 'Die Religionen des Alterthums sind Naturreligionen, d.h. die Gottheit ist in ihnen nicht als etwas über der Natur Erhabenes und von ihr specifisch Verschiedenes gesetzt, sondern als etwas der Natur Immanentes, bei allen ihren Wandlungen und in's Unendliche mannichfaltigen Gestaltungen Betheiligtes, bald als mithandelnd bald als mitleidend.' Preller (1846a), p. 49.

²⁰⁴ Preller (1859), p. 36. Cf. '...wie es in dem Wesen der Naturreligion liegt Vielgötterei zu sein' Preller (1848a), p. 369.

K.O. Müller, that Greek polytheism had been the end-product of the unification of the worships of separate tribal gods.²⁰⁵ As we shall see, this involved him in a debate with H.D. Müller, a continuator of K.O. Müller's approach.

If Preller rejected categorically the notion of Greek *Urmonotheismus*, he affirmed the presence of monotheistic elements in Greek religion.²⁰⁶ In contrast to the sharp distinction that he drew between monotheism and polytheism in his review of Welcker's *Griechische Götterlehre*, in an article on the Greek *Zwölgöttersystem* he maintained that there was no absolute contrast between monotheism and polytheism. Just as monotheistic religions had polytheistic aspects 'a need for monotheism and a corresponding quest' could be discerned in polytheistic religions.²⁰⁷ In his *Griechische Mythologie* he reiterated that Greek religion may not have been capable of transcending its limitations as a *Naturreligion* so as to arrive at the concept of a single God. Nevertheless, he argued that it exhibited a clear tendency to monotheism.²⁰⁸ At a first level, this could be seen in the conception of Zeus. According to Preller, Zeus was 'where antiquity had placed most of its monotheism'. Recalling the portrayal of Zeus in Stoic philosophy, Preller described Zeus as the ruling principle in the universe, as the general *ἡγεμονικόν*.²⁰⁹ As such, Zeus represented, in his eyes, the focal point of Greek polytheism. Preller drew attention to the difference between Welcker's and his own account of Zeus. Whereas Welcker's theory of Zeus Kronion amounted to a theory of qualified degeneration, his position was that in the course of time the conception of Zeus became loftier. The mythological representations of Zeus which for Welcker had been responsible for the partial

²⁰⁵ Preller (1848a), pp. 368–9.

²⁰⁶ In this respect there is a parallel between the views of Preller and Zeller. In *Die Entwicklung des Monotheismus bei den Griechen*, the latter also argued that Greek religion had originally been a polytheistic *Naturreligion*. He maintained, however, that it contained monotheistic elements that led to the further development of monotheism in poetry and philosophical thought: E. Zeller, *Die Entwicklung des Monotheismus bei den Griechen* (Stuttgart: Franckh, 1862), pp. 6ff. Preller likewise argued for a monotheistic tendency in Roman polytheism: Scheid (1987), p. 308.

²⁰⁷ 'der Gegensatz zwischen Monotheismus und Polytheismus ist kein absoluter. So gut die monotheistischen Religionen ihre polytheistischen Anwendungen haben, eben so gut ist auf der andern Seite ein monotheistisches Bedürfnis und ein entsprechendes Streben bemerkbar.' Preller (1846a), p. 49. As we shall see, the theme of polytheistic elements in monotheistic religions would be emphasized by Usener.

²⁰⁸ Preller (1854), p. 73.

²⁰⁹ Preller (1846a), p. 49.

corruption of the sublime conception of Zeus Kronion, marked, in Preller's eyes, a positive development.²¹⁰ According to Preller, Zeus had initially been conceived as a nature-spirit, as the spirit of the sky, and gradually developed through mythology into a personal god, the sovereign of gods and men. He maintained that 'this Zeus, the Zeus of the Iliad and of Pheidias, of Aeschylus and Pindar, is certainly a higher and more concrete concept than that nature-spirit of Dodona'.²¹¹ Preller argued that the tendency to transfigure the spirit of the sky into the ruler of the world reached its culmination in Aeschylus and his celebration of Zeus as the strongest, wisest and most benevolent god.²¹² We see that, as with Welcker, Aeschylus' portrayal of Zeus played an important part in Preller's argumentation for a monotheistic tendency in Greek religion. To convey his understanding of the towering position of Zeus in the Greek divine world Preller employed the image of the pyramid: 'it appears to me that the entire magnificent structure of Greek mythology, with its solid foundation of earth and sea, its aspiring divine hierarchies and lineages, its Olympus and its summit raised up into the pure ether, cannot be better understood than if we view Zeus as the apex and ultimate purpose of the entire pyramidal structure'.²¹³

According to Preller, a further indicator of a monotheistic tendency in Greek polytheism consisted in the grouping together of gods in myth, cult and art, insofar as it suggested unity in the divine world. He asserted that 'the general principle . . . is this: several figures are thought of as a single grouping, i.e. as an underlying visual or religious thought, which is then divided according to its different components and distributed amongst several figures in such a way that they appear as spouses, siblings, or a large family, or so that they seem inseparably linked and unified by a single act, shared purpose, or common relationship with a particular area or state'.²¹⁴ In his view, the family of the Olympians constituted the chief example of the first category, the group of the twelve gods the chief example of the

²¹⁰ Preller (1859), p. 40.

²¹¹ Preller (1859), p. 40. ²¹² Preller (1854), p. 99.

²¹³ Preller (1859), pp. 40–1, cf. Preller (1846a), p. 49.

²¹⁴ Preller (1854), p. 74. E. Gerhard in his *Griechische Mythologie* which appeared in the same year as Preller's own *Mythologie* likewise drew attention to 'Vereine von Gottheiten, welche als Inbegriff einer gemeinsam verehrten Vielzahl die Einheit göttlichen Wesens und Waltens mitten im Göttergedränge des Polytheismus darstellen'. E. Gerhard, *Griechische Mythologie* (Berlin: Reimer, 1854a), p. 76.

second.²¹⁵ Preller placed special emphasis on groups within the Olympian family. In so doing, he drew heavily on the account of the structure of the Olympian world in Nägelsbach's *Homerische Theologie* (1840). Nägelsbach's assertion in the foreword that the search for the one, living, personal God was 'the living pulsebeat in the entire religious development of antiquity' is indicative of the strongly Christianizing tone of the book.²¹⁶ For Nägelsbach, the formation of close groups among the major gods such as that between Zeus, Athene and Apollo reflected the Greek tendency to unity. He further maintained that Olympian gods fathered by Zeus should be seen as hypostases of their father, their power deriving from his.²¹⁷ Preller followed Nägelsbach in both points.²¹⁸ Thus he argued that Zeus as ruler and father of gods and men and Athena and Apollo as his dear daughter and son formed an inner circle within the Greek divine world in which 'everything highest and most dignified in the world of nature and of humans' was united.²¹⁹ Moreover, reproducing virtually *verbatim* Nägelsbach's views, he suggested that gods like Ares, Hephaistos, Artemis, Aphrodite and Hermes were in essence emanations of Zeus and as such expressed a monotheistic tendency in Greek religion.²²⁰ The fact that even a scholar like Preller, who was opposed to the notion of Greek *Urmonotheismus*, dwelled on the issue of monotheistic elements in Greek religion attests to the pervasiveness of Christianizing influence in the scholarship of the period.

Preller's treatment of the question of Greek monotheism provoked the reaction of Karl Lehrs. As we mentioned Lehrs was a student of Lobeck and a continuator of his teacher's tradition of rationalist criticism at the University of Königsberg.²²¹ Like Preller, Lehrs rejected the notion of Greek *Urmonotheismus*.²²² However, he was

²¹⁵ Preller (1854), p. 74.

²¹⁶ C.F. Nägelsbach, *Die Homerische Theologie* (Nürnberg: Geiger, 1861, second edition), p. xix.

²¹⁷ Nägelsbach (1861), pp. 107–13.

²¹⁸ Preller (1854), p. 76, L. Preller, 'Jupiter', in A. Pauly's *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Alterthumswissenschaft*, vol. 4 (Stuttgart, 1846b), pp. 587–629 at p. 612.

²¹⁹ Preller (1854), pp. 4, 76.

²²⁰ Preller (1846b), p. 612.

²²¹ Bursian (1883), p. 718.

²²² Lehrs emphasized that 'den Griechen als Griechen kennen wir nur als Polytheisten'. Mounting an attack not only against theories of *Urmonotheismus*, but also against the portrayal of the historical Greek as essentially monotheistic, he argued, 'Er konnte einen Gott wol begreifen, aber seine geistige Organisation und Bedürfniss verabscheute es ihn zu ergreifen.' Lehrs (1875), pp. 150–1.

strongly critical of Preller's portrayal of Zeus. In particular, Lehrs faulted Preller with confusing Stoic ideas about Zeus with popular religion. In his view, 'a Greek popular religion with a single God is inconceivable, it is a contradiction in itself.'²²³ Preller's account of Zeus may well have been vulnerable to Lehr's criticism. However, this should not obscure its significance: in Preller's *Griechische Mythologie*, one of the most popular handbooks of the second half of the nineteenth century, a case was made against *Urmonotheismus* and for progression rather than degeneration in the conception of Zeus. Lehrs raised the further objection that the tendency to worship groups of gods instead of a single god for any given function, far from suggesting a monotheistic tendency, actually highlighted the polytheistic instincts of the Greeks.²²⁴ However, the grouping together of gods is not an inherent feature of polytheistic religions, and it is arguable that in those religions in which it occurs, it does suggest a degree of unity in the divine world. Welcker's point about the familial ties among the Olympians and the arguments of scholars like Nägelsbach, Preller or Gerhard from divine groups more broadly are examples of how the quest for Greek monotheism in nineteenth-century scholarship led to engagement with one of the most interesting questions confronting the student of Greek polytheism, namely in what ways were the Greek gods grouped together and why.²²⁵

III.II. Preller's Account of Apollo

As we saw, Preller's fundamental hypothesis was that Greek religion was a *Naturreligion*, whereby the world was imagined to be animate with spirits. However, he held that from a very early period the Greek conception of the divine reached a stage of 'Theism', characterized by advanced personification and a perfected anthropomorphism.²²⁶ Preller underscored that one's view of the nature and qualities of the Greek gods depended on whether one looked at their portrayal in cult and cultic sagas or in epic poetry: 'images of nature predominate there, as do allegory and symbolism, and often mysticism. The gods appear more as symbols of natural life than in individually developed

²²³ Lehrs (1875), p. 266.

²²⁴ Lehrs (1875), p. 267.

²²⁵ For recent examinations of divine groupings see Burkert (2011), pp. 266–8 and Appendix One, 'Grouping the Gods', Versnel (2011), pp. 501–15.

²²⁶ Preller (1854), pp. 1–2.

forms. Or, to put it differently, their forms gain deeper justification primarily because one goes back to the older images of nature.' By contrast, in epic poetry and especially in Homer, the gods appeared 'to participate so vividly in all events and actions of the human world, that they themselves became human to such a degree that it would be impossible to imagine any instance of greater realism or anthropopathism'.²²⁷ In associating the worship of nature-deities with mysticism and contrasting it to the humanity of Homeric religion Preller stood in the tradition of Voss. However, he took issue with him as regards the privileging of Homer as a source of Greek religion. According to Preller, scholars had long tended to regard the representations of the gods in epic poetry as the oldest and as normative.²²⁸ As mentioned, Voss was the leading advocate of this approach and Preller himself had followed him in his first work, *Demeter und Persephone*.²²⁹ In the *Griechische Mythologie*, however, he emphasized, like Welcker, that Homer's portrayal of the gods constituted only one stage in the development of the Greek conception of the divine and declared his intention to concentrate on the *Cultusgöttern*. In his view, these were older and provided 'the underlying concepts of the whole of Greek mythology, out of which every other image and saga developed'.²³⁰ Thus like the writings of Forchhammer or Welcker's *Götterlehre*, Preller's *Griechische Mythologie* constituted an attempt to go beyond Homer to find the roots of Greek religion.

As we saw, Preller associated the *Naturbilder* which he alleged were prevalent in the cultic conceptions of the gods with mysticism. This association is more strongly accentuated in his early writings.²³¹ Thus in *Demeter und Persephone* Preller portrayed the sympathy with nature, which he regarded as the basis of ancient *Naturreligionen*, as a source of mysticism.²³² Although Preller acknowledged in that work that mysticism was a necessary element of all historical religions, he made an attempt to attribute the mystical aspects of Greek religion such as, for example, the worship of the 'earth-goddess' Demeter to

²²⁷ Preller (1854), pp. 74–5.

²²⁸ Preller (1854), p. 75.

²²⁹ Preller revealingly had opened *Demeter und Persephone* by stating: 'Homer ist die erste und lauterste Quelle aller griechischen Mythologie.' Preller (1837), p. 1.

²³⁰ Preller (1854), pp. 75–6, 3.

²³¹ In the *Griechische Mythologie* it is mostly the worship specifically of Earth-deities that is associated with mysticism: 'Das Charakteristische an ihnen ist das Sentimentale, Ekstatische, Mystische'. Preller (1854), p. 397.

²³² Preller (1837), pp. 241–2.

the old Pelasgian inhabitants of Greece.²³³ This point, which exonerated the historical Greeks from mysticism, we shall also encounter in the writings of the advocates of the historical-critical approach. Moreover, in his entry on the mysteries in Pauly's *Real-Encyclopädie* (1848) Preller asserted that 'strong men and peoples [such as, significantly, according to Preller, the Greeks at the time of Homer, the early Romans and the ancient Germans] tend to be averse to mysticism because their consciousness of God is more one of kinship with him than of estrangement from him'.²³⁴ As we shall see, this negative view of mysticism recalls the attitude towards mysticism in the *Dorier* by Preller's teacher, K.O. Müller. In the same entry, Preller further suggested that mysticism tended to be a feature of the religions of the Orient whence it came to Greece,²³⁵ reproducing the stereotype of Oriental mysticism we have seen in the writings of rationalist scholars like Voss and which we shall find again in the writings of K.O. Müller. In the *Griechische Mythologie*, there appears to be a change of tone concerning the issue of sympathy with nature. Construed as nature-myths, Greek myths were said to be among 'the most beautiful nature-poetry that can possibly exist and they attest to such a deep sympathy between the human soul and natural life as in our civilized modern days at most the poet and the enthusiastic natural scientist are capable of empathizing with'.²³⁶ As we mentioned in 1852 Preller had travelled to Greece and his impassionate descriptions of its landscape and nature two years later in his *Griechische Mythologie* suggest that he was taken with them.²³⁷ This makes it arguable that Preller's experience of Greek nature accounts for a shift in emphasis in his portrayal of the issue of sympathy with nature: from the mystical connotations in his earlier writings to its association with beautiful nature-poetry in the *Griechische Mythologie*.

According to Preller, from early on 'the form of the [Greek] gods was defined according to the sensual impression made by a natural phenomenon, and in the same way their character echoed the accompanying emotion'. He suggested, for example, that storms had given

²³³ Preller (1837), pp. 2, 18–19.

²³⁴ L. Preller, 'Mysteria', in A. Pauly, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Alterthumswissenschaft*, vol. 5 (Stuttgart, 1848b), pp. 311–36 at pp. 333–4.

²³⁵ Preller (1848b), pp. 333–4.

²³⁶ Preller (1854), p. 1. Cf. J. de Vries, *Forschungsgeschichte der Mythologie* (Freiburg: Alber, 1961), p. 203.

²³⁷ E.g. Preller (1854), p. 445.

rise to the notion of quarrelsomeness, the clarity of the sky to purity and so forth.²³⁸ I focus on Preller's account of Apollo as an example of his broader method of interpretation of the Greek gods. Preller argued that Apollo's worship derived from Asia Minor,²³⁹ unlike his teacher, K.O. Müller, who, as we shall see, held that the origins of Apollo were Dorian. In a further contrast to K.O. Müller, Preller espoused the theory that Apollo had by origin been a solar god—not in the sense of being identifiable with the sun as such, but rather as a god of light. Preller's account of Apollo as a solar god began with a eulogy of light which again suggests a resonance between physical interpretations and his own feeling for nature. According to Preller, Apollo was the god of the 'splendid, solemn, in the loftiest sense of the word divine nature of light, the victorious foe of all that is daemonic and abominable and the all-pervading cause of all that is beautiful and harmonious'. As 'the light-god par excellence, born and dwelling in light', Preller further stated, Apollo was 'the most sublime, now still deeply moving figure of Greek religion'.²⁴⁰ To both Preller and his teacher, K.O. Müller, Apollo was the loftiest figure of the Greek pantheon. However, whereas, as we shall see, for K.O. Müller, as for Voss, to view Apollo as a solar god would be to associate him with degrading *Naturschwärmerei* and mysticism, it was as a god of light that Apollo won the admiration of Preller.

For Preller, the broadest range of Apolline features from his cults and myths to his functions, symbols and animals could be explained via reference to his solar origins. Thus he suggested that these provided the key to what he regarded as two of his oldest cults, the cults of Apollo Lykeios and Apollo Amyklaios. In Preller's opinion, the epithet Lykeios indicated a connection with the wolf, an animal which supposedly symbolized the power of the sun. In the case of Apollo Amyklaios, he further suggested that the disc with which Apollo killed Hyakinthos was a symbol of the solar disc.²⁴¹ Apollo's parentage provided a mythical expression of the birth of the sun-god from the union of the dark night (Leto) with the god of the sky. The myths of Apollo's fights against Tityos and Python stood for the victory of the sun-god over the forces of darkness.²⁴² Apollo's arrows were

²³⁸ Preller (1854), p. 2.

²³⁹ Preller (1854), p. 160.

²⁴⁰ Preller (1854), pp. 151–2.

²⁴¹ Preller (1854), pp. 161–3.

²⁴² Preller (1854), pp. 153, 155. In the case of the myth of Apollo's fight against Python, Preller accommodated Forchhammer's interpretation within his own solar

emblems of the sunbeams while his tripod alluded to 'the fiery nature of the god of the light and the sun'.²⁴³ In addition, for Preller, Apollo's association with the sun accounted for his purifying, healing and apotropaic functions: 'as his own being is lustre and clarity so he outshines all that is bleak and evil with his mild light and does not tolerate it, but finds the means for cure and reconciliation.'²⁴⁴ Apollo was entrusted with the protection of streets, pastures and woods because as god of the sun, he was considered to be omnipresent.²⁴⁵ The resonance between solar interpretation and Preller's feeling for nature is further visible in the way he accounted for Apollo's association with music. He suggested that Apollo's lyre 'actually signifies a flow of melodious lightwaves, which pour in the most beautiful way into the human heart that joyful mood of returning brightness and warmth in all of nature'. Similarly, Preller stated that the portrayal of Delos as golden in the literary sources amounted to 'a beautiful image for the dense gleam of the first radiating light and sunshine which in the super-fine air of southern lands indeed covers illuminated objects like a strong gilding'.²⁴⁶

Despite Preller's assertion that the Greek conception of the divine progressed into a stage of theism, the distinction between origins and subsequent development appears largely lost in his treatment of Apollo. Moreover, as we saw, Preller tended to ascribe to Apollo's solar origins a virtually all-explaining value. *Mutatis mutandis* this is also visible in Preller's account of the other gods which makes his *Griechische Mythologie* an example of the tradition of physical interpretation at its most extreme. Lehrs subjected Preller's physical interpretations to sharp criticism from a rationalist standpoint.²⁴⁷ As we shall see, Preller's method of physical interpretation was also criticized by the advocates of the historical-critical approach and especially H.D. Müller. It was only, however, after the even later attacks by anthropological writers like Lang that the influence of his *Griechische Mythologie* began to wane.

explanation. Citing Forchhammer he stated that Python could also be seen as an image of flooding water 'wie sie sich in dem engen Pleistothale und ähnlichen Gebirgsgegenden in der wüsten Zeit des Jahres darstellen mochte' Preller (1854), p. 156.

²⁴³ Preller (1854), pp. 181–2.

²⁴⁴ Preller (1854), p. 179.

²⁴⁵ Preller (1854), p. 167.

²⁴⁶ Preller (1854), pp. 159, 155.

²⁴⁷ K. Lehrs, 'Naturreligion', in Lehrs (1875), pp. 261–300.

We should note, however, that, for all its shortcomings, Preller's model of interpretation at least provided scope for recognizing that there was a darker side to the Greek gods. Preller subscribed to the view that had roots in antiquity that nature-gods tended to have two sides, a benevolent one and a destructive one, as a reflection of nature's powers both to give and to take life. In the case of Apollo, he argued that this inherent duality was manifested in his dual appellation *Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων*. *Φοῖβος* expressed the irradiating nature of light, but also the ethical purity of his being. *Ἀπόλλων*, on the other hand, which, in Preller's view, derived from *ἀπό* and *ῥαυμι*, was the death-dealing god armed with the bow.²⁴⁸ In addition, Preller drew attention to enthusiastic and ecstatic aspects in the worship of Apollo, especially in the spheres of music, prophecy and catharsis.²⁴⁹ In fact, he maintained that 'no cult is in this respect so rich as the Apolline and only that of Zeus and Dionysos can be compared to it'. He further asserted that the difference between Apollo and Dionysos with respect to enthusiasm and ecstasy was only a difference of degree, not a qualitative one.²⁵⁰ Thus he argued, 'from opposite points of departure, both the cults of Apollo and Bacchus led to similar moods and effects, which in many ways touched on each other and crossed, although the Dionysiac emotion was throughout a more forceful than the Apolline.' Preller suggested that it was for this reason that Apollo and Dionysos were frequently worshipped together.²⁵¹ As we shall see, K.O. Müller and his student, E. Curtius promoted a stereotypical view of Apollo as a god of *Heiterkeit* and harmony. Nietzsche, Rohde and Harrison espoused the validity of this stereotype and it was largely as a reaction to it that they emphasized the contrasting figure of Dionysos and his ecstatic worship. And yet, in such a mainstream work as Preller's *Griechische Mythologie*, this stereotype was largely subverted: Apollo and Dionysos were brought together as fellow representatives of the ecstatic element in Greek religion.

As we mentioned, Preller's *Griechische Mythologie* was one of the most widely read works on Greek religion in the second half of the nineteenth century. Despite reworking by the editors of the third and fourth editions, Plew and Robert, who did not espouse Preller's

²⁴⁸ Preller (1854), p. 152.

²⁴⁹ Preller (1854), p. 172.

²⁵⁰ Preller (1854), p. 172. Cf. Borgeaud (1999), p. 193, n. 37.

²⁵¹ Preller (1854), pp. 172, 440.

method of physical interpretation, the latter remained to a considerable extent unchanged in the later editions of Preller's *Mythologie*²⁵² and became, as we shall see, a point of reference for later scholars—both advocates and critics of physical interpretations.²⁵³

IV. PHYSICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE GREEK GODS AND INDO-EUROPEAN COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY

The three scholars we have examined so far studied Greek religion primarily in a Greek context. We shall now consider two representatives of comparative approaches, and in particular, of Indo-European Comparative Mythology. In his *Myth, Ritual and Religion* (1887), Andrew Lang observed: 'While physical allegory, religious and esoteric symbolism, verbal confusion, historical legend and an original divine tradition, perverted in ages of darkness, have been the most popular keys in other ages, the scientific nineteenth century has had a philological key of its own.'²⁵⁴ This 'philological key' was provided above all by Indo-European Comparative Mythology which became increasingly influential from the 1850s onwards.²⁵⁵ Its emergence should be seen in the light of the accumulation of literary material such as the sacred texts of the religions of ancient India and Persia, the Rig-Veda and the Zend-Avesta,²⁵⁶ and the development of Indo-

²⁵² Cf. O. Kern, *Hermann Diels und Carl Robert. Ein biographischer Versuch* (Leipzig: Reisland, 1927), pp. 70–1, Kern (1938), p. 305.

²⁵³ Preller's *Mythologie* was also influential in French scholarship serving as one of the models for Decharme's own *Mythologie*: Decharme (1879), p. ii. For Preller's influence in England and specifically on Pater's account of Apollo see W.F. Shuter, 'Pater's "Grudge against Apollo": Mythology and Pathology in "Apollo in Picardy"', *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920* 44(2), 2001, pp. 181–98. Nilsson bears witness to the longevity of Preller's *Griechische Mythologie*: 'Preller, der das beste mythologische Handbuch verfaßt hat, das in seiner Neugestaltung durch C. Robert noch heutigen tags unentbehrlich ist'. Nilsson (1941), p. 5. Cf. Kern (1927), p. 71.

²⁵⁴ A. Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, vol. I (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1887), p. 21.

²⁵⁵ On the history and development of Indo-European Comparative Mythology see M. Olender, *Les Langues du Paradis* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), Arvidsson (2006).

²⁵⁶ F. Max Müller, 'Semitic Monotheism' (1860), in J.R. Stone, *The Essential Max Müller* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), pp. 25–42 at p. 41, Kippenberg (2002), pp. 25–6, Detienne (1986), p. 7. On the Western interest in the Vedas in the

European Comparative Linguistics.²⁵⁷ The linguistic researches of scholars such as W. von Humboldt and F. Bopp (1791–1867) demonstrated that Sanskrit, Greek, Latin and German were closely connected, leading to the theory that they derived from a common source, an Aryan *Ursprache*. This discovery gave rise to the expectation that the religions of the Indo-European peoples might similarly derive from an Aryan *Urreligion* and conduced to a broader interest in the origins of Aryan nations in the period.²⁵⁸ Comparative studies of the Greek, Roman and Indian religions in themselves were not a novel phenomenon. Sir William Jones' famous essay 'On the gods of Greece, Italy and India', for example, had already appeared in the late eighteenth century.²⁵⁹ However, owing to its basis in Comparative Linguistics, Indo-European Comparative Mythology laid claim to an unprecedented scientific pedigree. For its advocates the study of language provided *the* means to penetrate into the origins of ancient religions, a view that would later in the century be challenged by archaeology and anthropology.²⁶⁰

IV.A. The Greek Gods in the Light of the Veda: Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900)

Along with the Berlin professor Adalbert Kuhn (1812–81), Max Müller was one of the chief proponents of Indo-European Comparative Mythology.²⁶¹ Son of the romantic poet Wilhelm Müller

eighteenth century see Schwab (1984), Marchand (2009), U. App, *The Birth of Orientalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

²⁵⁷ On the emergence of Indo-European Comparative Linguistics see A. Morpurgo-Davies, *Nineteenth-Century Linguistics*, G.C. Lepschy (ed.), *History of Linguistics*, vol. IV (London/New York: Longman, 1998), Marchand (2009), pp. 124–34. On the history of the terms 'Indo-European' and 'Aryan' see Olender (1989), pp. 26–8, Arvidsson (2006), pp. 20–2, Marchand (2009), p. 128.

²⁵⁸ F. Max Müller, 'Science of Religion: A Retrospect' (1898), in Stone (2002), pp. 353–6 at p. 354. On the fascination with Aryan origins in contemporary philology, historiography and religious studies see Olender (1989), pp. 22–3, van den Bosch (2002), pp. 201–3.

²⁵⁹ On Jones see B. Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth. Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 76–100.

²⁶⁰ Cf. J.W. Burrow, 'The Uses of Philology in Victorian England', in R. Robson, (ed.), *Ideas and Institutions of Victorian Britain: Essays in Honour of George Kitson Clark* (London: Bell, 1967), pp. 180–204 at p. 203.

²⁶¹ Graf (1993), p. 25. On Kuhn see Williamson (2004), pp. 213–19, Arvidsson (2006), pp. 84–7. On the life and work of Max Müller see van den Bosch (2002),

(1794–1827), Friedrich Max Müller was born in Dessau in 1823. In his autobiography, he stated that he was raised in a ‘liberal and tolerant’ Protestant environment.²⁶² He studied philology at Leipzig with G. Hermann and at Berlin with Bopp. At university Max Müller became acquainted with ‘the purely historical and scientific treatment of religion, which, while it explained many things and destroyed many things, never interfered with my early ideas of right and wrong, never disturbed my life with God and in God, and seemed to satisfy all my religious wants’.²⁶³ As we shall see, Max Müller’s writings would expose him later in life to charges of irreligion. In defence of Max Müller, his wife, Georgina Müller underlined in her biography of her husband his ‘firm faith in a personal God ruling and directing all things in love and wisdom, and in Christ’s own teaching’, but added: ‘not, indeed, as shown in the teaching of Roman Catholic priests, or Calvinistic ministers.’²⁶⁴ After his studies in Germany Max Müller went to Paris in 1845 where he attended E. Burnouf’s lectures on the Rig-Veda at the Collège de France.²⁶⁵ In 1846 he left Paris for London in order to work on manuscripts of the Rig-Veda located at the library of the East India Company.²⁶⁶ As Davis notes, if the British looked to Germany for advances in scholarship, German scholars turned to Britain for access to manuscripts deriving from its colonial territories.²⁶⁷ In London Max Müller was introduced to the minister of Prussia, Christian Bunsen (1791–1860), a major figure in the promotion of Anglo-German cultural relations.²⁶⁸ In his autobiography Max Müller recounts that ‘this acquaintance was to become the turning-point of my life’,²⁶⁹ for ‘Bunsen’s name was a power in

N.C. Chaudhuri, *Scholar Extraordinary. The Life of Professor, the Rt. Hon. Friedrich Max Müller, P.C.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), J.R. Stone, ‘Introduction’, in Stone (2002), pp. 1–23.

²⁶² F. Max Müller, *My Autobiography* (London: Longmans, Green, 1901), p. 64.

²⁶³ Max Müller (1901), p. 305. On Max Müller’s religious background and views see further Chaudhuri (1974), pp. 70–6, van den Bosch (2002), pp. 16–17.

²⁶⁴ Max Müller II (1902), p. 264.

²⁶⁵ Max Müller (1901), pp. 167–70, Stone (2002), p. 14.

²⁶⁶ Max Müller (1901), p. 188. ²⁶⁷ Davis (2007a), p. 171.

²⁶⁸ U. Kirchberger, ‘Introduction’, in Ellis/Kirchberger (2014), pp. 1–19 at p. 11.

²⁶⁹ Max Müller (1901), p. 190. The two men would form a close friendship. In his autobiography, Max Müller cites Baroness Bunsen’s statement: ‘The kindred mind, their sympathy of heart, the unity in highest aspirations, a congeniality in principles, a fellowship in the pursuit of favourite objects, which attracted and bound Bunsen to his young friend (i.e. myself), rendered this connexion one of the happiest of his life.’ Max

England, and his patronage was the very best introduction that I could have had'.²⁷⁰ With Bunsen's support Max Müller was entrusted with the translation and edition of the text of the Rig-Veda.²⁷¹ To supervise the printing of his edition of the Rig-Veda by the University Press Max Müller moved from London to Oxford.²⁷² He was to remain there to the end of his life in 1900. At the time of his arrival Oxford was convulsed by the Tractarian movement.²⁷³ Max Müller mentions that an anti-German climate prevailed in Oxonian theological circles when he first went there which intensified in the course of his long stay: 'With them German meant much the same as unorthodox, and unorthodox was enough at that time to taboo a man at Oxford.'²⁷⁴ As he related, 'In one of the sermons preached in these early days at St Mary's, German theologians such as Strauss and Neander (*sic*) were spoken of as fit only to be drowned in the German Ocean, before they reached the shores of England.'²⁷⁵ In his autobiography Max Müller dissociated himself from the theological controversies then raging in Oxford: 'to return to my first experiences of the theological atmosphere of Oxford, I confess I felt puzzled to see men, whose learning and character I sincerely admired, absorbed in subjects which to my mind seemed simply childish . . . I cared for none of these things.'²⁷⁶ Max Müller's Oxford career suffered a setback when he was not appointed to the Chair of Sanskrit in 1860.²⁷⁷ His candidacy had been highly polarizing, turning into a clash between the conservative and the more liberal circles of the university. Max Müller's German

Müller (1901), p. 191. On similarities between Bunsen and Max Müller's views on religion see Burrow (1967), pp. 198, 200–2.

²⁷⁰ Max Müller (1901), p. 201. As will be seen, Bunsen's 'patronage' was a double-edged sword as he had not only powerful connections, but also enemies who sought to thwart Max Müller's career.

²⁷¹ Davis (2007a), p. 171.

²⁷² Max Müller (1901), pp. 218ff.

²⁷³ Van den Bosch (2002), p. 45.

²⁷⁴ Max Müller (1901), p. 20. On the long tradition of suspicion about, but also influence from, German theological ideas in Britain see Davis (2007a), pp. 99–159.

²⁷⁵ Max Müller (1901), pp. 20–1. Van den Bosch notes that Strauss' *Leben Jesu* was translated into English in 1846, one year before Max Müller's arrival in Oxford: van den Bosch (2002), pp. 45–6.

²⁷⁶ Max Müller (1901), pp. 300–1, cf. 'Anyhow I could not bring myself to see the importance of such questions, if only the heart was right and if the whole of our life was in fact a real and constant life with God and in God. That is what I called a truly religious and truly Christian life.' Max Müller (1901), p. 292, van den Bosch (2002), p. 47.

²⁷⁷ Van den Bosch (2002), pp. 82–3.

origins appear to have aroused the suspicion of the former and helped ingratiate him with the latter.²⁷⁸ Conservative members of the university strove to contain the spread of subversive ideas from Germany and attacked the 'Germanisers' as they pejoratively called their liberally-minded colleagues.²⁷⁹ Max Müller's supporters denounced the anti-German bias of the other side. Thus one of them spoke of 'an inferior candidate being preferred before him, first because Max was a German and therefore a "Germaniser"; secondly, because a friend of Bunsen must of necessity be heretical; thirdly, because it was unpatriotic to confer an English Chair on any but an Englishman'.²⁸⁰ Another attempted to defend him from 'the implied charge of un-English religion, and even of irreligion, [which] is at once the most serious, the most gratuitous, and the most cruel'.²⁸¹ Max Müller himself referred in his autobiography to 'very good reasons, whether financial, theological, or national, [because of which] I, or rather my friends, failed to secure a majority in Convocation for a professorship of Sanskrit'.²⁸² Despite this initial disappointment, with the aid of his supporters Max Müller went on to have a distinguished academic career in Oxford. In 1868, the university's first professorship of comparative philology was established specially for him.²⁸³ In the course of his long career he was decorated with numerous awards and medals of honour in Britain and abroad and his reputation exceeded the confines of the academic community.²⁸⁴ In his obituary of Max Müller, Professor Macdonell stated that he was 'the first to inaugurate the study of Comparative Mythology in this country'.²⁸⁵ This may be exaggerated, but for more than forty years, from his seminal essay on Comparative Mythology in 1856 to the *Contributions to the Science of Mythology* in 1897, Max Müller was the most prominent advocate of Indo-European Comparative Mythology in Britain as well as the face of German scholarship to the British public.²⁸⁶

According to Max Müller, Indo-European peoples shared not only a linguistic, but also a mythological heritage.²⁸⁷ In his view, the

²⁷⁸ Chaudhuri (1974), pp. 99–100. Cf. Davis, (2007a), p. 176.

²⁷⁹ Chaudhuri (1974), pp. 99–100.

²⁸⁰ Max Müller I (1902), p. 244.

²⁸¹ Max Müller I (1902), p. 241.

²⁸² Max Müller (1901), p. 12.

²⁸³ Van den Bosch (2002), p. 96.

²⁸⁴ Turner (1981), pp. 104–5.

²⁸⁵ Cited in Max Müller I (1902), p. 242.

²⁸⁶ Davis (2007a), p. 169.

²⁸⁷ F. Max Müller, *Contributions to the Science of Mythology*, vol. I (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1897), p. 21.

etymological analysis of the names of the protagonists of Indo-European myths provided the key to their original nature and, consequently, to the original meaning of the myths in which they appeared. He maintained that 'Unless we hold that these names were imposed miraculously, they must have had a reasonable purpose, and whenever we can discover that reasonable purpose, we have come as near the very conception of gods and goddesses as it is possible'.²⁸⁸ Within the Indo-European comparative framework, Max Müller, like Kuhn, assigned a privileged role to the oldest surviving Aryan religious document, the Veda. He famously proclaimed: 'The mythology of the Veda is to comparative mythology what Sanskrit has been to comparative grammar.'²⁸⁹ In his view, one could discern in it 'ideas and their names growing, which in Persia, Greece and Rome we meet with only as full-grown or as fast decaying'.²⁹⁰ Max Müller further emphasized that the names of most Vedic gods were etymologically transparent, designating them as gods of the various elements of nature. As mentioned, the evidence of the Veda provided fresh and seemingly solid support for the view that the gods of all Indo-European religions had been gods of natural elements and phenomena.²⁹¹

IV.A.I. The Supreme Aryan God and Zeus

The most spectacular discovery of Indo-European Comparative Mythology consisted in the etymological equation of the Sanskrit Dyaus-Pitar or Heaven-Father with the Greek Zeus Pater, the Latin Jupiter and the Old Norse Tur. Max Müller hailed it as 'the most

²⁸⁸ Max Müller I (1897), p. 21.

²⁸⁹ F. Max Müller, 'Comparative Mythology' (1856), *Chips from a German Work-shop*, vol. II (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1867b), pp. 1–143 at p. 75. E. Csapo, *Theories of Mythology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), p. 22.

²⁹⁰ F. Max Müller, 'Lecture on the Vedas, or the Sacred Books of the Brahmins' (1865), in Stone (2002), pp. 43–67 at p. 54. In France, Maury, drawing on the work of Kuhn, likewise stated that 'Pour nous représenter l'état religieux des premiers habitants de la Grèce, il me faudra donc souvent avoir recours aux Védas'. Maury (1857), p. 51. Maury also wrote the revealingly entitled *Essai Historique sur la Religion des Aryas pour Servir à Éclaircir les Origines des Religions Hellénique, Latine, Gauloise et Slave* (Paris: Leleux, 1853). Cf. Petersen (1864), p. 75.

²⁹¹ 'The question whether most of the ancient gods and heroes derived their origin from physical phenomena has been answered once for all by the Veda.' Max Müller I (1897), p. 22, cf. Bremmer (2005), pp. 25–6.

important discovery which has been made during the nineteenth century with respect to the ancient history of mankind'.²⁹² In his eyes, it demonstrated that prior to their separation the Indo-Europeans had worshipped an unseen Being 'under the self-same name, the best, the most exalted name, they could find in their vocabulary—under the name of Light and Sky'.²⁹³ Max Müller portrayed the Aryan god of the sky not as a 'mere' personification of the sky, but rather as a Supreme God strongly reminiscent of the Christian God. Thus he stated that "Thousands of years have passed since the Aryan nations separated . . . but when they search for a name for what is most exalted and yet most dear to every one of us, when they wish to express both awe and love, the infinite and the finite, they can but do what their old fathers did when gazing up to the eternal sky, and feeling the presence of a Being as far as far and as near as near can be: they can but combine the self-same words, and utter once more the primeval Aryan prayer, Heaven Father, in that form which will endure forever, 'Our Father which art in heaven.'²⁹⁴ As the passage above indicates, the sense of identification with the ancient Aryans is pronounced in the writings of Max Müller. When referring to the modern descendants of the Aryans Max Müller tended to employ the first person plural. This reinforced the notion of kinship between the English and the Germans.²⁹⁵ It should be noted that throughout his long stay in Britain Max Müller was an advocate of a political rapprochement between the Teutonic (and Protestant) England and Germany as well as the United States.²⁹⁶ At the time of the Franco-Prussian war Max Müller revealingly stated in a letter to Gladstone:

²⁹² F. Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion. The Gifford Lectures delivered before the University of Glasgow in 1891* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1892), p. 82. Kippenberg (2002), p. 43.

²⁹³ F. Max Müller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1873), p. 171. For a current view on the significance of the etymological equation of Zeus with Dyaus see Burkert (2011), p. 198.

²⁹⁴ Max Müller (1873), p. 173. Cf. "Think what this equation implies! It implies not only that our own ancestors and the ancestors of Homer and Cicero spoke the same language as the people of India—this is a discovery which, however incredible it sounded at first, has long ceased to cause any surprise—but it implies and proves that they all had once the same faith, and worshipped for a time the same supreme deity under exactly the same name—a name which meant Heaven-Father'. Max Müller (1892), p. 82.

²⁹⁵ Davis (2007a), p. 186 who examines further examples of advocates in England of the kinship between England and Germany. Cf. Kirchberger (2014), p. 11.

²⁹⁶ Van den Bosch (2002), p. 170, Chaudhuri (1974), p. 247.

'My great anxiety through all this war has been the unfriendly feeling that is springing up between England and Germany. The whole future of the world seems to me to depend on the friendship of the three Teutonic nations, Germany, England, and America.'²⁹⁷ His friend, Gelzer, wrote to him: 'whenever I thought of you, it was as our spiritual ambassador in England, as the indispensable representative and pioneer in Britain of German opinions, and cultivation of the highest order.'²⁹⁸ Max Müller's writings exuded a sense of Aryan superiority. Thus in his old age he dismissed the increasingly influential anthropological approach on the grounds that 'There are exceptions, but many of these savages from whom we are to learn how to solve the riddles left us in the mythology and the superstitions of the ancient Indo-European conquerors of the world, seem to me like dwarfs in whom human nature became degraded at a very early time, and who, even if of late they have recovered, will never tell us what were the aspirations of the giant ancestors of our own race'.²⁹⁹ However, Max Müller underlined that his use of the term Aryan was linguistic and that he opposed its use in a racial sense: 'There are Aryan and Semitic languages, but it is against all rules of logic to speak, without an expressed or implied qualification, of an Aryan race, of Aryan blood, or Aryan skulls, and to attempt ethnological classification on purely linguistic grounds.'³⁰⁰

To go back to Max Müller's account of the Aryan 'Heaven Father', his Christianizing portrayal of him as a Supreme God constituted a reaction against a stereotypical contrast between Indo-European and Semitic religions, the most famous advocate of which was Max Müller's fellow student at Paris and friend, E. Renan (1823–92). Renan argued that Indo-European religions tended to be polytheistic *Naturreligionen* as opposed to the monotheistic religions of the Semites and that the Indo-European peoples would not have arrived

²⁹⁷ Cited in Max Müller I (1902), p. 390.

²⁹⁸ Cited in Max Müller II (1902), p. 3.

²⁹⁹ Max Müller I (1897), p. 175. Cf. Csapo (2005), pp. 27, 29.

³⁰⁰ F. Max Müller, 'On the Results of the Science of Language', *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. IV (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1875), pp. 210–50 at pp. 222–3. Cf. 'it would be as wrong to speak of Aryan blood as of dolichocephalic grammar' Max Müller (1875), p. 223. Cf. van den Bosch (2002), pp. 203–7. As Arvidsson observes, some of the ambiguities in Max Müller's positions are in part to be 'explained by the fact that he revised his opinions during his sixty years of activity' Arvidsson (2006), p. 81, n. 53.

at, or embraced, monotheism had it not been for the Semites.³⁰¹ This view was unacceptable to Max Müller.³⁰² In agreement with more liberal contemporary theological views he stated in his Gifford lectures on Physical Religion at Glasgow in 1890 that 'it has been the chief object of my lectures to show that the concept of God arises by necessity in the human mind, and is not, as so many theologians will have it, the result of one special disclosure, granted to Jews and Christians only'.³⁰³ Again, Max Müller placed emphasis on the evidence of the Veda. In the latter, he pointed out, one could encounter such verses as 'He who above the gods, was the one God'. This, Max Müller argued, 'proves as a fact what I wished to establish, that the human mind, such as it is, and unassisted by any miracles except the eternal miracles of nature, did arrive at the concept of God in its highest and purest form, did arrive at some of the fundamental doctrines of our own religion'.³⁰⁴ Max Müller further stressed that in certain Vedic hymns, 'the poet seems to know, for the time being, of one single god only. That single god is to him the only god, and in the momentary vision of the poets his divinity is not limited by the thought of any other god'.³⁰⁵ To designate this phenomenon, Max Müller employed the term 'henotheism'.³⁰⁶ Advancing a compromise

³⁰¹ E. Renan, *Études d' Histoire Religieuse* (Paris: M. Lévy, 1858), pp. 66–7, 85–7, Max Müller (1860) in Stone (2002). On Renan's contrast between, and the broader contemporary discourse on, Aryans and Semites see Leonard (2012), pp. 115ff., M. Olender, 'The Indo-European Mirror: Monotheism and Polytheism', in Schmidt (1987), pp. 327–75 at pp. 333–43, Olender (1989), pp. 77ff., Arvidsson (2006), pp. 93–6. For further reactions to Renan's views on Semitic monotheism see Williamson (2004), pp. 224ff.

³⁰² Cf. Olender (1987), pp. 348–9, Olender (1989), p. 114.

³⁰³ F. Max Müller, *Physical Religion. The Gifford Lectures Delivered before the University of Glasgow in 1890* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1891), p. 341. Cf. Turner (1981), p. 108. On contemporary liberal theology see Arvidsson (2006), p. 69.

³⁰⁴ Max Müller (1891), p. 366.

³⁰⁵ Max Müller (1891), pp. 180–1. Cf. 'In the religious childhood of India, as represented to us in the hymns of the Veda, we can see this henotheistic tendency fully developed. We can see a poet, or a family, or a clan, or a village believing in this or that god as for the time and for certain purposes the only god, yet quite ready, under new circumstances, to invoke the help of another god, who again stands supreme, or, more correctly, stands alone, before the mind of the suppliant, as his only helper in distress.' Max Müller (1891), p. 181.

³⁰⁶ Max Müller (1891). On Max Müller's use of the term 'henotheism' see van den Bosch (2002), pp. 347–56. The term has been re-employed in modern scholarship by H.S. Versnel in *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion I. Ter Unus, Isis, Dionysos, Hermes, Three Studies in Henotheism* (Leiden: Brill, 1990b) and Versnel (2011) who

position in the debate on *Urmonotheismus* versus *Urpolytheismus* Max Müller maintained that 'there is one kind of monotheism, though it would more properly be called theism, or henotheism, which forms the birthright of every human being'.³⁰⁷ The views that Max Müller expressed in his Gifford lectures provoked a sharp reaction in Scotland. In her biography of her husband, Georgina Müller cited Monsignor Munro as stating in St. Andrew's Cathedral: 'The Gifford Lectures delivered by Professor Max Müller were nothing less than a crusade against Divine revelation, against Jesus Christ, and against Christianity... The pantheism of the lectures made Divine revelation simply impossible; it reduced God to mere nature... Judge what Christianity would be in this country in another generation, if teaching was to be tolerated like that of these *blasphemous lectures*'.³⁰⁸ On his part, Max Müller protested against the attacks of 'theologians who profess and call themselves Christians, and who yet maintain that worst of all heresies that during all the centuries that have elapsed and in all the countries of the world, God *has* left Himself without a witness, and has revealed Himself to one race only, the most stiff-necked of all the Semitic races, the Jews of Palestine'.³⁰⁹ He was 'glad to hear', he further stated 'that these attacks emanated chiefly from Roman Catholic priests, carrying on at present an active propaganda at Glasgow, from men who consider not only the heathen, but all who are not Roman-Catholics, more particularly all honest searchers after truth, as outside the love of God'.³¹⁰ Max Müller said of his work that 'it will serve to show the glory of God in the government of the world from the beginning; it will show that there was no portion of mankind ever forsaken by our common Father'.³¹¹ In this context we may note the

defines it as 'the privileged devotion to one god, who is regarded as uniquely superior, while other gods are neither depreciated nor rejected and continue receiving due cultic observance whenever this is ritually required'. Versnel (2011), pp. 243–4. On the use of the term in the twentieth century see Versnel (1990b), pp. 35–6.

³⁰⁷ Max Müller (1860) in Stone (2002), p. 29, Schmidt (1987), p. 47, van den Bosch (2002), p. 347, Olender (1987), pp. 350–1. Other scholars like Adolphe Pictet (1799–1875) argued for Aryan monotheism: Olender (1989), p. 127–41.

³⁰⁸ Max Müller II (London 1902), p. 263. It may be recalled that in the recent past Robertson Smith had been tried for heresy in Scotland: Wheeler-Barclay (2010), pp. 150–5, Kippenberg (2002), pp. 68–70.

³⁰⁹ Max Müller (1892), p. vi.

³¹⁰ Max Müller (1892), p. vi, van den Bosch (2002), pp. 151–2.

³¹¹ Max Müller I (1902), p. 262.

different ways in which rivalry with Roman Catholicism found expression in the writings of German Protestant scholars from Voss to Max Müller (or Usener, as we shall see later).

Max Müller's reference to the Jews of Palestine might also suggest that he was influenced by anti-Semitic bias. In his autobiography, he stated: 'As children we were brought up without any prejudice against the Jews, though we had, no doubt, a certain feeling that they were tolerated only, and were not quite on the same level with ourselves. We also felt the religious difficulty sometimes very strongly.'³¹² He further looked back to what he described as the trouble-free coexistence of Christians and Jews in Dessau during his childhood and contrasted it with the contemporary 'revulsion of feeling all over Germany, or what is called Anti-Semitism'. Max Müller emphasized that modern anti-Semitism was a social, economic and political phenomenon rather than a religious one.³¹³ He refrained, however, from condemning it in terms that imply a latent endorsement of anti-Semitism: 'One cannot blame the Jews or any other speculators for using their opportunities, but they must not complain either if they excite envy, and if that envy assumes in the end a dangerous character.'³¹⁴

In addition, Max Müller's position should be seen as a reaction against the spread of scientific materialism. In this respect, his stance recalls Welcker. Writing in the late 1870s, Max Müller stated: 'Every day, every week, every month, every quarter, the most widely read journals seem just now to vie with each other in telling us that the time for religion is past, that faith is a hallucination or an infantine disease, that the gods have at last been found out and exploded.'³¹⁵ To the view that religion was the result of faulty reasoning which would be exposed with the progress of science, Max Müller responded with the emphatic assertion that in fact 'Every religion, even the most imperfect and degraded, has something that ought to be sacred to

³¹² Max Müller (1901), pp. 68–9.

³¹³ Max Müller (1901), pp. 68–71. 'The Anti-Semitic hatred is the hatred of money-making, more particularly of that kind of money-making which requires no hard work.' Max Müller (1901), p. 70.

³¹⁴ Max Müller (1901), p. 70.

³¹⁵ F. Max Müller, 'The Ideas of Infinity and Law' (1878), in Stone (2002), pp. 231–48 at p. 231. Cf. 'There are philosophers, no doubt, to whom both Christianity and all other religions are exploded errors, things belonging to the past, and to be replaced by more positive knowledge'. F. Max Müller, 'Preface', *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. I (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1867a), pp. vii–xxxii at p. xxx. Cf. Turner (1981), pp. 108–9.

us, for there is in all religions a secret yearning after the true, though unknown God'.³¹⁶

The etymological equation of the Sanskrit Dyaus-Pitar with the Greek Zeus Pater, the Latin Jupiter and the Old Norse Tur was a discovery the primary implications of which concerned the presumed worship of an Aryan Supreme God. This is not to say, however, that it had no implications for the study of Greek religion and for the broader perception of the Greeks. At the widest level, the theory that the ancient Greeks and the ancient Germans were related not only in terms of language, but also in terms of religion reinforced the sense of affinity between them.³¹⁷ As we have seen, even scholars who did not adhere to the methodological principles of Indo-European Comparative Mythology like Welcker did suggest that the Greeks and the Germans shared common characteristics by virtue of belonging to the same family of peoples.

Insofar as the study of Greek religion was concerned, the etymological connection between Zeus Pater and Dyaus-Pitar led to a radical rethinking concerning the etymology of the names of the Greek gods. Max Müller argued that if the name of a Greek deity was similar to the name of another Indo-European deity as in the case of Zeus, then no etymology for the former would be valid that did not account for the latter as well.³¹⁸ As a consequence, Greek etymologies of the kind proposed, for example, by Forchhammer or Welcker were to be dismissed. At a further level, Max Müller asserted that the etymological equation of the names of Zeus and Dyaus settled conclusively the question of its meaning: 'That *Zeus* was originally a name of the sky, could hardly have been denied by any Greek scholar; but it was not till the corresponding deity, *Dyaus*, was discovered in the Veda that all opposition was silenced, and silenced for ever'.³¹⁹ Pointing to the various functions of Zeus that were associated with the sky such as raining, thundering or cloud-gathering Max Müller claimed that 'There was nothing that could be told of the sky that was not in some form or other ascribed to Zeus'.³²⁰ Max Müller, however,

³¹⁶ Max Müller, Preface (1867a), p. xxx.

³¹⁷ Cf. Burkert (1992), p. 2.

³¹⁸ F. Max Müller, Greek Mythology (1858a), pp. 151–2.

³¹⁹ Max Müller (1891), p. 11.

³²⁰ F. Max Müller, 'Lecture X. Jupiter, the Supreme Aryan God', in *Lectures on the Science of Language*, Second Series (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1864), pp. 413–61 at p. 444.

drew a distinction between the religious and the mythological conception of Zeus.³²¹ Referencing Welcker's portrayal of Zeus he maintained 'That Zeus was originally to the Greeks the Supreme God, the true God—nay, at some times their only God—can be perceived in spite of the haze which mythology has raised around his name'.³²² This proved wrong the many who were misled into believing that 'what we call religion—our trust in an all-wise, all-powerful, eternal Being, the Ruler of the world, whom we approach in prayer and meditation, to whom we commit all our cares, and whose presence we feel not only in the outward world, but also in the warning voice within our hearts—that all this was unknown to the heathen world'.³²³ Again, one notes the central role that the idea of God played in the understanding of religion at the time. The religious conception of Zeus as a Supreme Deity, omnipotent and omniscient, appeared to be belied by his portrayal in myth as a god who could be deceived and defied. This contradiction was, in Max Müller's opinion, the result of the dual source from which conceptions of Zeus stemmed. The attributes of omnipotence and omniscience derived from the religious conception of Zeus as a Supreme Deity. The notion that there were limits to his power, as well as his immoral conduct, derived from his mythological conception as a personification of the sky. These two conceptions of Zeus, the religious and the mythical, lived in uneasy co-existence: 'For good and for evil, Zeus the sky and Zeus the god are wedded together in the Greek mind, language triumphing over thought, tradition over religion'.³²⁴

The instrumental role that language played in the emergence of Aryan mythology is a recurrent theme in the writings of Max Müller. In his eyes, mythology was to be seen as 'the dark shadow which language throws on thought'.³²⁵ Max Müller combated the view first against Grote and later against anthropological writers like Lang that mythology attested to the irrationality of early man.³²⁶ Instead he stressed that 'What we must hold fast . . . is that every myth and legend was at first an intelligible utterance of an intelligible

³²¹ Cf. Detienne (1986), p. 14.

³²² Max Müller (1864), p. 438.

³²³ Max Müller (1864), p. 414.

³²⁴ Max Müller (1864), p. 444.

³²⁵ F. Max Müller, 'On the Philosophy of Mythology' (1871), in Stone (2002), pp. 145–66 at p. 150. Cf. van den Bosch (2002), pp. 258–65, Detienne (1986), p. 10.

³²⁶ Van den Bosch (2002), pp. 163, 243–6.

thought'.³²⁷ In his opinion, owing to the limited powers of expression of their language, the Aryans had been incapable of describing the phenomena of nature in an abstract manner. Therefore, they had been compelled to talk of the succession of the dawn by the sun in terms of the sun's love and embrace for the dawn, of the setting of the sun in terms of the sun's growing old or dying, and so forth. In the course of time, the original meaning of the names used in such expressions was forgotten. To make sense of them, later generations changed the meaningless names into persons, which gradually resulted in the development of elaborate mythical stories.³²⁸

The appeal of this method of myth-interpretation in this period was understandably very great.³²⁹ As Turner notes, it 'provided a major channel whereby a very unsavoury side of Greek civilization was domesticated for educated Victorians'.³³⁰ For it made possible to show on allegedly scientific grounds that 'certain stories which seemed irrational or irreverent, when told of gods such as Jupiter or Apollo or Athene, became perfectly intelligible if accepted as they were told originally of the sky or the sun or the dawn'.³³¹ In his *Contributions to the Science of Mythology* (1897) in his old age, Max Müller revealingly stated that, in his eyes, 'the most important outcome of Comparative Mythology' was 'the conviction which it leaves in our minds that the ancestors of the Aryan races were not mere drivelling idiots'.³³² In a similar vein, he asserted: 'It is to me the same relief to know that the gods of Greece and India were not mere devils or the work of devils or fools, but that they also, even in their greatest degradation, had a rational meaning and a noble purpose'.³³³

In addition, as in the case of Forchhammer or Preller, the interpretation of ancient myths as nature-myths resonated with Max

³²⁷ F. Max Müller, 'Solar Myths', *The Nineteenth Century* 106, 1885, pp. 900–22 at p. 903.

³²⁸ Max Müller, *Comparative Mythology* (1856), pp. 63–4, 72ff.

³²⁹ J.B. Bullen, 'Introduction', in Bullen (1989), pp. 1–11 at p. 7.

³³⁰ Turner (1981), p. 110.

³³¹ Max Müller (1885), p. 920. Cf. 'The linguistic and solar theory relieved the otherwise largely admirable Greeks of the burden of having followed an irrational and immoral religion.' Turner (1981), p. 111. Cf. Csapo (2005), p. 22.

³³² Max Müller I (1897), p. 21. Cf. 'if it could be proved that we were descended from idiots and maniacs—and many of the stories of the ancient gods are the stories of maniacs—we might justly feel nervous as to atavistic influences.' Max Müller I (1897), p. 68. Cf. van den Bosch (2002), p. 250.

³³³ Max Müller I (1897), p. 22.

Müller's feeling for nature.³³⁴ This comes out clearly in his description of the dawn, the natural phenomenon which he regarded as providing the basis of most Aryan myths: 'Who has not seen the gradual advance of this radiant procession—the heaven like a distant sea tossing its golden waves—when the first rays shoot forth like brilliant horses racing the whole course of the horizon—when the clouds begin to colour up, each shedding her own radiance over her more distant sisters!'³³⁵ Max Müller's sensitivity to nature may have been in part indebted to the romantic poetry of his father, of which he said that it was dear 'to those who, amidst the hurry of life, have not forgotten the delight of absorption in nature, who have never lost their faith in the mystery of the divine presence in all that is beautiful, good, and true on earth'.³³⁶ Max Müller further pointed to the contrast between ancient attitudes towards nature and its modern scientific conception: 'We cannot realise that sentiment with which the eye of antiquity dwelt on these sights of nature. To us all is law, order, necessity.'³³⁷ However, this did not translate in his case, or in the case of his fellow comparative mythologists, to a disparagement of the former as 'primitive'. Max Müller is perhaps the best-known of the scholars who portrayed the ancient Aryan attitude towards nature as comparable to contemporary nature-poetry. In fact, Max Müller suggested that to gain insight into the former one should look at the latter—one should turn to the writings of Wordsworth or Kingsley.³³⁸ In the context of describing the Aryans' 'mythical language of nature', for example, he maintained that when Wordsworth spoke of "the last hill that parleys with the setting sun", this expression came to him as

³³⁴ In a 1849 letter to his mother Max Müller gave voice to a nostalgia for nature typical of the age: 'There is nothing so beautiful as being alone with nature: one sees how God's will is fulfilled in each bud and leaf that blooms and withers, and one learns to recognize how deeply rooted in one is this thirst for nature. In living with men, one is only too easily torn from this real home.' Max Müller I (London 1902), p. 99.

³³⁵ Max Müller, *Comparative Mythology* (1856), p. 95. Cf. 'There is no sight in nature more elevating than the dawn even to us' Max Müller (1856), p. 94. Cf. J.M. Kitagawa and J.S. Strong, 'Friedrich Max Müller and the Comparative Study of Religion', in N. Smart, J. Clayton, P. Sherry, and S.T. Katz (eds.), *Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West*, vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 179–213 at p. 195.

³³⁶ F. Max Müller, 'Wilhelm Müller' (1858b), *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. III (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1870), pp. 103–21 at p. 106.

³³⁷ Max Müller, *Comparative Mythology* (1856), p. 96.

³³⁸ Van den Bosch (2002), p. 253. On Max Müller's association of mythology with nature-poetry see van den Bosch (2002), pp. 251–8, Arvidsson (2006), p. 89.

he was communing with nature . . . it was a thought such as the men of old would not have been ashamed of in their common every day conversation . . . There are some poems of this modern ancient which are all mythology.³³⁹ The fact that even J.S. Blackie, otherwise one of the sharpest critics of Max Müller, was in unison with him in regarding Greek mythology as 'a religion and a poetry of nature' and in suggesting the fourth book of *The Excursion* as a guide to an understanding of its origins highlights the close association between ancient nature-mythology and modern nature-poetry in the eyes of Victorian scholars.³⁴⁰ This is not to say that there were not those who questioned these analogies. Max Müller himself stated that his critics charged him with 'ascribing to the ancients sentimental and philosophical thoughts, which might be possible with Heine, but which were declared to be quite impossible with Vedic Rishis or American Redskins!,'³⁴¹ but insisted that they were to be found in the sources. Through the comparisons with the works of contemporary nature-poets both Aryan and Greek myths gained a striking closeness to the Victorians,³⁴² in contrast to anthropological interpretations which

³³⁹ Max Müller, *Comparative Mythology* (1856), p. 58.

³⁴⁰ Blackie (1870), p. 2. Cf. 'The signature of a religion of nature in an anthropomorphic theology can be understood only by a mind contemplating nature under the same conditions and influences that were present when the theology was formed. It is only, therefore, from the combined action of poetry, piety, and philosophy—such as existed in the soul of Wordsworth—that a recovery of the significance of the symbolic representations of a religion of nature is to be looked for; mere science will not suffice.' Blackie (1870), p. 3. Pater provides a further example. In discussing the conception of Dionysos as a god of the vine, he stated, 'as Wordsworth says, "Beauty born of murmuring sound / Shall pass into her face"—so conceive an image into which the beauty, "born" of the vine has passed; and you have the idea of Dionysus.' W. Pater, 'A Study of Dionysus: the Spiritual Form of Fire and Dew', *Greek Studies; a Series of Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1895), pp. 1–48 at p. 32. Cf. 'The Myth of Demeter and Persephone' Pater (1895), pp. 79–155 at pp. 95–6. The same can be said of Symonds: Jenkyns (1980), p. 180. In France, Decharme offers a close parallel to Blackie: 'La science toute seule ne suffit pas à leur interprétation; il faut y apporter encore un sentiment profond de la nature et une sorte de divination poétique' Decharme (1879), p. xvii. In the twentieth century, W.F. Otto reiterated, 'Die rationale Wissenschaft, ob sie historisch oder psychologisch eingestellt ist, hat uns enttäuscht. Sie vermag keine Antwort auf die Frage zu geben, was jene Götter waren, um dem genialsten aller Völker das Höchste zu bedeuten. Wir brauchen das Zeugnis der Seltensten, der Dichter [for Otto, especially Goethe and Hölderlin], die selbst vom Glanz des Ewigen getroffen sind.' Otto (1955), p. 183.

³⁴¹ Max Müller (1885), p. 917.

³⁴² As Chase observes, 'we discover that Aryan thought is remarkably like the more sentimental, nature-worshipping side of Victorian thought' R. Chase, *Quest for Myth* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1949), p. 45, cf. Williamson (2004), p. 218.

emphasized the distance between the 'savage' myth-maker and the rational modern European. Moreover, at a time of increasing disquiet about the effects of rapid industrialization and urbanization and of laments for the loss of the beauty of nature, the portrayal of ancient myths as nature myths promoted the romantic conception of the past as an epoch unspoiled by technological and scientific progress and resonated with the yearning for the re-sanctification of nature.³⁴³

IV.A.II. Apollo the Door-Opener

The discovery that the names of Zeus and Dyaus were etymologically related raised the prospect that the names of other Greek and Vedic gods would likewise prove related. Thus Kuhn suggested that 'Hermes' was linked to 'Sârameya', the name of the canine offspring of 'Saramâ' = Dawn. Max Müller maintained that 'Here' corresponded to '*Svârâ', a feminine of svar = the sun and the bright sky, 'Athena' to 'Ahanâ' = Dawn, 'worshipped as their tutelary deity by the people of the Morning-city of Attica [*sic*]' and so forth.³⁴⁴ As mentioned, the comparisons of the Greek gods to the elemental gods of the Veda were taken to shed fresh light on the former's physical origins. Apollo provides a case in point: deviating from the principle of name comparison Kuhn and Maury compared Apollo to the solar Rudra and Sourya, a comparison which they believed confirmed Apollo's solar nature.³⁴⁵ Although Max Müller acknowledged the similarities

³⁴³ For Ruskin, for example, 'the solar theory indicated that a spiritual, moral approach to nature was still possible even in age of materialistic science and economics.' Turner (1981), p. 112. Cf. 'Ruskin was led into this earnest defence of Greek beliefs because like Wordsworth and his followers he passionately desired to invest nature with religious associations.' Jenkyns (1980), p. 181. On the similarities and differences between Ruskin's and Max Müller's view of mythology see D. Birch, *Ruskin's Myths* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) and D. Birch, 'The Sun Is God: Ruskin's Solar Mythology', in Bullen (1989), pp. 109–23 at pp. 117–22.

³⁴⁴ Max Müller II (1897), pp. 504, 673–80, 726. F. Max Müller, Lecture XI, 'Myths of the Dawn', in *Lectures on the Science of Language*, Second Series (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1864), pp. 462–524 at pp. 502–4.

³⁴⁵ A. Kuhn, *Sagen, Gebräuche und Märchen aus Westfalen* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1859), pp. 8–9, Max Müller II (1897), pp. 703–5, Maury (1857), pp. 127–8. Cf. L. de Ronchaud, 'Apollo', in C. Daremberg and E. Saglio (eds.), *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, vol. 1 (Paris: Hachette, 1875, second edition), pp. 310–21 at p. 312. For a recent comparison of Apollo to Rudra and other Indo-European deities see M.L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 148–50.

between Apollo and the archer god Rudra, he remained committed to the comparison and analysis of divine names. He claimed to have discovered the etymology of 'Apollo' with the help of its alleged Sanskrit equivalent, 'Apa-var-yan' = door-opener.³⁴⁶ On this interpretation, the name 'Apollon' originally designated 'the god who shuts off the darkness of the night or the darkness of the clouds . . . and who thus opens or reveals the light', a function which, according to Max Müller, was typical of sun- and light deities in the Veda.³⁴⁷ On the question of the significance of the discovery of the origins of Apollo for one's understanding of the historical Apollo, Max Müller oscillated. On the one hand, he suggested 'is it not clear that nearly all the stories told of him confirm his original character or at all events are never in conflict with it?'³⁴⁸ His account of the myth of Apollo and Daphne provides a characteristic example.³⁴⁹ In Max Müller's view, Apollo's amorous pursuit of Daphne, which he argued was equivalent to 'dawn' in Sanskrit, was 'no more than a description of what everyone may see every day; first the appearance of the Dawn in the eastern sky, then the rising of the Sun as if hurrying after his bride, then the gradual fading away of the bright Dawn at the touch of the fiery rays of the sun, and at last her death or disappearance in the lap of her mother, the Earth'.³⁵⁰ Both Max Müller's feeling for nature and his intention to cleanse Greek mythology from irrational and immoral elements are visible in his account of this myth. He asserted that 'Anyone who has eyes to see and a heart to feel with nature like the poets of old, may still see Daphne and Apollo,—the dawn rushing and trembling through the sky, and fading away at the sudden approach of the bright sun'.³⁵¹ Moreover, he maintained that 'so long as *Daphne* was understood as a name of the dawn, and *Phoebos* as the name of the morning sun, nothing could be more rational than to say that *Daphne* fled from the embraces of *Phoebos*'.³⁵² In addition, Max Müller held that Apolline epithets such as Thyraios and Propylaios which had conventionally been seen as given to Apollo because of the location of his statues in the vicinity of doors, 'long before the invention of statues had a very different meaning, as opening the gate

³⁴⁶ Max Müller II (1897), p. 692.

³⁴⁷ Max Müller II (1897), pp. 695, 692.

³⁴⁸ Max Müller II (1897), p. 696.

³⁴⁹ Van den Bosch (2002), pp. 283–5.

³⁵⁰ Max Müller (1871) in Stone (2002), p. 157.

³⁵¹ Max Müller, *Comparative Mythology* (1856), pp. 92–3.

³⁵² Max Müller (1885), p. 904.

of the sky, and as stepping forth from the door of the morning'.³⁵³ On the other hand, he underscored that the character of Apollo in its full development could not be sufficiently explained via reference to his origins as a revealer of light as illuminated by the Veda. Thus he argued that such core Apolline functions as prophecy and music belonged exclusively to Apollo's 'Greek' phase: 'Neither can we look in the Veda for a god representative of music and of prophecy as Apollon was in Greece. These are the reflexions of Greek life, and though they may have been assigned to Apollon without contravening his original physical character, they are of Greek, not of Aryan growth.'³⁵⁴ One may compare his view on the value of Kuhn's association of 'Hermes' with 'Sârameya': 'That the Greek Hermes is a character very different from Sârameya was never denied. It seemed to have been forgotten that Comparative Mythology must be satisfied with a comparison of mythological germs, and that we can never hope to explain what is secondary and peculiarly Greek in the character of Hermes from Vedic sources. Etymology takes us back to the cradle of a god, but seldom to his later manhood.'³⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Max Müller also claimed that 'after the etymology of a mythological name has once been satisfactorily settled, we have not only the real starting-point in the history of a deity or a hero, but also a clear indication of the direction which that history followed from the first'. His position, therefore, as to the relevance of Indo-European Comparative Mythology to the study of the Greek gods as they had developed in the historical period was equivocal.

The views of Max Müller achieved great popularity in Britain between the late 1850s and at least the 1880s as did those of Kuhn in Germany both in scholarship and in literature and art.³⁵⁶ However, even during this period they also met with strong criticism especially from the side of classical scholars. Stray observes that 'Much of the

³⁵³ Max Müller II (1897), pp. 692–3.

³⁵⁴ Max Müller II (1897), p. 702.

³⁵⁵ Max Müller II (1897), p. 676. Cf. 'It is a most unfortunate idea of classical scholars to imagine that Comparative Mythologists have forgotten all their Greek and Latin, and cannot see the differences between Vedic and Homeric deities. They are taken to task for saying things which they never dreamt of.' Max Müller I (1897), p. xv.

³⁵⁶ Feldman/Richardson (1972), p. 482, Turner (1981), pp. 111–12. On Max Müller's British disciples such as George William Cox see Dorson (1968), pp. 174–7. For the popularity of solar motifs in Victorian literature and art see Bullen (1989). The principles of Indo-European Comparative Mythology as formulated by Max Müller and Kuhn were also influential in France (e.g. Maury [1857] and Decharme [1879]).

scholarly opposition to the rise of comparative philology can be ascribed to its implicit demotion of Greek and Latin in favour of Sanskrit'.³⁵⁷ Several classical scholars had similar reservations about Indo-European Comparative Mythology and disputed that the religion of the Veda could be of any significant relevance to the understanding of Greek religion. Max Müller himself claimed that 'even those who have surrendered Greek etymology as useless without the aid of Sanskrit, protest against this desecration of the Greek Pantheon, and against any attempt at deriving the gods and fables of Homer and Hesiod from the monstrous idols of the Brahmins'.³⁵⁸ Again Blackie offers an example. In his view, the interpretation of Greek deities was to be found 'within the bounds of Greece itself' and he warned that 'we shall raise only a brilliant confusion, if we follow Max Mueller across the Hindu Kush'.³⁵⁹ As mentioned, Blackie bemoaned the growing influence of German scholarship in Britain and his opposition to Max Müller is to be understood, in part, in terms of Anglo-German antagonism as is that of later British critics of Indo-European Comparative Mythology like Lang or Farnell.³⁶⁰ However, the portrayal of the opposition to Indo-European Comparative Mythology as a confrontation between British and German scholarship, as Blackie or Lang would have it, was tendentious as it ignored the sharp criticism which Indo-European Comparative Mythology was facing in Germany. As we shall see, the advocates of the historical-critical approach accused scholars in the tradition of Indo-European Comparative Mythology of unduly concentrating on the Aryan origins of Greek religion at the expense of its subsequent development in Greece. Moreover, with the exception of the etymological equation of Zeus and Dyaus, the etymologies proposed by

³⁵⁷ Stray (1998), p. 108, cf. Arvidsson (2006), p. 52.

³⁵⁸ F. Max Müller, 'Lecture IX. The Mythology of the Greeks', *Lectures on the Science of Language* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1868, second edition), pp. 384–412 at p. 407.

³⁵⁹ Blackie (1874), p. 189.

³⁶⁰ Ironically for Nietzsche Max Müller was 'to be pilloried as a German who has renounced German character [*Wesen*] and succumbed to English superstitions' NKSA 7: 109 quoted in Williamson (2004), p. 369, n. 44. Max Müller's wife also mentions that when he publicly defended Britain during the Boer war, 'So angry was the German public that the Leipzig branch of the Pan-Germanic League (the All-Deutscher Verein) drew up a solemn protest against Max Müller's *apologia* for England. The protest closed with the words, "You have no longer the right to call yourself a German."' Max Müller II (1902), p. 408.

scholars in the tradition of Indo-European Comparative Mythology met with increasing scepticism in German scholarship. Even scholars who had formerly embraced its principles as Mannhardt had done in his *Germanische Mythen* (1858) eventually came to renounce it. Thus in *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte* (1877) Mannhardt argued that comparative mythologists had underestimated the differences between the study of mythology and language.³⁶¹ Most results of Indo-European Comparative Mythology, including his own *Germanische Mythen*, he stated there had been 'mistaken, premature or insufficient'.³⁶² In the late 1880s Gruppe undertook a very extensive refutation of the principles of Indo-European Comparative Mythology.³⁶³ Moreover, the arch-enemies Nietzsche and Wilamowitz were on common ground in rejecting Indo-European Comparative Mythology. Nietzsche protested against those 'who fancy that they have found in the limited worship of a celestial body by the upright Indo-Germans a purer form of religion than the polytheism of the Greeks'.³⁶⁴ Wilamowitz reiterated Mannhardt's objection that religion could not be studied on the analogy of language³⁶⁵ and dismissed what he called 'Racenmythologie'.³⁶⁶ In Britain the most serious blow came with the emergence of anthropology. As we shall see, in the 1880s Lang subjected Indo-European Comparative Mythology to sustained attacks in an effort to demonstrate the superiority

³⁶¹ W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte* (Berlin: Borntraeger, 1877), p. xvii.

³⁶² Mannhardt (1877), p. xx.

³⁶³ Gruppe (1887), pp. 72–184, L. Bloch, 'Antike Religion', in W. Kroll, *Die Altertumswissenschaft im letzten Vierteljahrhundert* (Leipzig: Reisland, 1905), pp. 428–64 at p. 438. Cf. Arvidsson (2006), p. 130. In his overview of the state of the study of Greek religion, Friedländer also maintained that the significance of the Veda for the interpretation of the Greek gods had been vastly overestimated: Friedländer (1887), pp. 94–5.

³⁶⁴ Quoted in Williamson (2004), p. 242.

³⁶⁵ In his view, it was 'einen verhängnisvollen irrthum, dass man dasselbe was sich für die sprachen ergab, ohne weiteres auf den glauben übertrug. denn der religiöse gedanke bindet sich nicht an die sprache und lange nicht immer an die nation' U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Euripides. Herakles*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Weidmann, second edition, 1895a), p. xii.

³⁶⁶ Wilamowitz drew an instructive contrast between 'Racenmythologie' and comparative studies of 'lower mythology' of the kind undertaken by Mannhardt: 'die sog. "niedere mythologie" und der "aberglaube" sind deshalb mit besonders gutem erfolge bearbeitet worden, weil hier die racenmythologie gar nicht möglich war, weil das princip der analogie anerkannt ward, das so viel fruchtbarer ist als die ableitung aus einer präsumirten gemeinsamen quelle.' Wilamowitz (1895a), p. xii.

of anthropology.³⁶⁷ In the light of criticism, the principles of Indo-European Comparative Mythology had to be modified. Roscher and Usener provide two examples of how Indo-European Comparative Mythology became re-invented in the later nineteenth century.

IV.B. Comparing Greek and Roman Gods: Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher (1845–1923)

W.H. Roscher, best-known as the editor of the *Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie* (1884–1937), was one of the last champions of physical interpretation. Son of the eminent German economist G.F.W. Roscher (1817–94), Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher was born in Göttingen in 1845. He studied classical philology at Göttingen and Leipzig where he was a fellow student of Nietzsche and Rohde. Roscher embarked on a career in secondary education rising to the rank of *Geheimrat*. He joined the University of Dresden at a late stage in 1905.³⁶⁸

In the preface to his monograph on Apollo and Mars in 1873, the first in a series of comparative studies of Greek and Roman gods spanning the 1870s and the 1880s, Roscher deplored the stagnant state which, in his view, prevailed in the study of Greek and Roman mythology. He contended that works of note on mythological subjects had for years been scarce and that when they did appear, they met with indifference. The study of mythology, he pronounced, had come to a state of *Misskredit*.³⁶⁹ This state of affairs he attributed in large part to the methodological inadequacy of the works of his predecessors. Scholars like K.O. Müller, Welcker or Preller, he maintained, deserved praise for some of their insights and for their

³⁶⁷ Dorson (1968), p. 187, Turner (1981), p. 119.

³⁶⁸ S. Siebert, 'Roscher, Wilhelm Heinrich', in F.W. Bautz and T. Bautz (eds.), *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, vol. 8 (Hamm, West. 1994), pp. 665–6, J. Hillman, *Pan and the Nightmare* (Irving, Texas: Spring, 1979), pp. ii–ivff., C. Bonnet, *La Correspondance Scientifique de Franz Cumont Conservée à l'Academia Belgica de Rome* (Brussels: Institut Historique Belge de Rome, 1997), p. 424.

³⁶⁹ W.H. Roscher, *Studien zur Vergleichenden Mythologie der Griechen und Römer I. Apollon und Mars* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1873), p. 1. On Roscher's interpretive approach see ch. 5 'Apollo and Mars One Hundred Years after Roscher', Versnel (1994), esp. pp. 289–92, M. Konaris, 'The Greek Gods in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century German and British Scholarship', in Bremmer/Erskine (2010), pp. 483–503 at pp. 484–6.

collection of material. However, they 'either had no confident answers or none at all to the most important questions regarding the earliest form and the creation of most myths and divine figures because their methodology left them high and dry'.³⁷⁰ As this indicates, Roscher too remained committed to the discovery of the origins of the Greek gods. Having dissociated himself from some of the most well-known names of the previous generation of German scholarship, Roscher claimed to be standing for a new methodology that could alone provide a way out of the impasse in the field. He argued that scholars like Max Müller, Kuhn and Mannhardt had shown the way forward by laying the foundations for the comparative study of Indo-European mythology on the analogy of Comparative Linguistics. Roscher asserted that if their work had yielded valuable results, a comparative approach that would focus on the mythology of two Indo-European peoples as closely related in terms of language as the Greeks and the Romans held even greater promise.³⁷¹ In proposing to compare Greek and Roman myths, Roscher was inspired by the comparison of Greek and Latin grammar as conducted by his teacher at Leipzig, Georg Curtius, brother of the archaeologist and historian, Ernst Curtius.³⁷² If the notion of Greco-Roman comparisons was in itself far from original, Roscher maintained that from J.A. Hartung's *Die Religion der Römer* (1836) to Th. Mommsen's account of Roman religion in his *Römische Geschichte* (1854–56) or L. Preller's *Römische Mythologie* (1858) the emphasis in contemporary scholarship was on differentiating between the Roman and the Greek religion and that comparative studies of Greek and Roman deities going beyond superficial similarities were lacking.³⁷³ A significant exception consisted in A. Preuner's *Hestia-Vesta* (1864). In that work, Preuner pursued a large-scale comparison between Hestia and Vesta drawing on a broad range of evidence from myth and cult to philosophical thought. In his

³⁷⁰ Roscher (1873), p. 2.

³⁷¹ Roscher (1873), pp. 3, 4.

³⁷² '...die strenge Methode der Vergleichung, wie sie namentlich von Georg Curtius und seiner Schule für die Disciplin der griechischen und lateinischen Grammatik ausgebildet worden ist, so gut als möglich auch auf die Behandlung der griechischen und römischen Mythen zu übertragen.' W.H. Roscher, *Hermes der Windgott* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1878), p. 1. Georg Curtius was the author of *Sprachvergleichende Beiträge zur griechischen und lateinischen Grammatik* (Berlin: Besser, 1846).

³⁷³ W.H. Roscher, *Studien zur Vergleichenden Mythologie der Griechen und Römer II. Juno und Hera* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1875a), pp. 2–4, Roscher (1873), pp. 4–5.

view, the similarities between the two goddesses were to be explained on the theory that they had originally been the same deity, a fire-deity going back to the period of a hypothetical single Greco-Roman *Urvolk*.³⁷⁴ Roscher acknowledged Preuner's *Hestia-Vesta* as well as Mannhardt's comparison of Germanic and Indian deities in *Germanische Mythen* (1858) as models for his own comparative work.³⁷⁵ However, unlike Preuner—or Max Müller—Roscher would compare gods on the basis of similarity of function rather than of name. The difference between his and Max Müller's approach comes out clearly in his drawing a comparison between Mars and Apollo rather than between Mars and the Vedic deity Marut as proposed by Max Müller.³⁷⁶

Like Preuner, Roscher undertook a detailed comparative study of Apollo and Mars intended to examine 'the totality of evidence pertaining to both the cult and myth of both gods'.³⁷⁷ One notes the inclusion of cult and not only myth in Roscher's comparative programme. According to Roscher, the comparison of Apollo to Mars revealed wide-ranging similarities: both gods had a military and an oracular function; they were both associated with the protection of colonies; their festivals and sacred days were celebrated at the same time; they had the same symbols in the wolf, the hawk and the laurel; most importantly, they had both by origin been solar gods.³⁷⁸ On the analogy of Preuner's *Hestia-Vesta* Roscher held that the similarities between Apollo and Mars indicated the original identity of the two gods at the period of a Greco-Italian *Vorzeit*.³⁷⁹ He further argued

³⁷⁴ A. Preuner, *Hestia-Vesta. Ein Cyclus religionsgeschichtlicher Forschungen* (Tübingen: Laupp, 1864), pp. 201–2.

³⁷⁵ Roscher (1873), p. 5.

³⁷⁶ Roscher (1873), pp. 5–8. Max Müller argued against Roscher's comparison in Max Müller II (1897), pp. 710–14. In his view, 'Mars . . . corresponds to Marut, the storm-wind.' Max Müller II (1897), p. 712.

³⁷⁷ Roscher (1873), p. 92.

³⁷⁸ Roscher (1873), pp. 5–7. cf. Versnel (1994), pp. 290–1. In his study of Apollo and Mars, Versnel argued that, although Roscher's comparison of Apollo and Mars was marred by his solar interpretations, it had some basis. He built on it to advance a structuralist account of the two gods: Versnel (1994), pp. 296ff. According to Versnel, 'Apollo and Mars specifically operate in periods, places and situations which demand control over the division of two worlds, the inner region of order, society, culture and the outer one of chaos, wilderness, nature.' Versnel (1994), p. 310. Cf. 'we may now cautiously conclude that Roscher was not so wrong after all: Mars and Apollo present undeniable structural similarities, but Roscher's sun has blinded subsequent investigators and the parallelism has disappeared from the discussion.' Versnel (1994), p. 327.

³⁷⁹ Roscher (1873), p. 92.

that a comparative study of other pairs of Greek and Roman gods such as Jupiter and Zeus, Juno and Hera, Ceres and Demeter or Liber and Bacchus would also point in the direction of original identity.³⁸⁰

As we mentioned, for Roscher the most important point of similarity between Apollo and Mars was that they had both originally been solar deities. Roscher's solar interpretation of Apollo may serve as an example of his method of interpretation of the Greek gods in general. Roscher maintained that the view that Apollo was by origin a solar god was generally accepted in contemporary scholarship citing, among others, the names of Welcker and Preller. As a result, he did not argue at length in its support. He claimed that Apolline epithets such as *Λύκειος*, *Λυκηγενής*, or *Αἰγλήτης*, designated Apollo 'as the bright one, the one born in light or the shining one'.³⁸¹ In his later article on Apollo in the *Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie* in 1884 he asserted that his own comparative study had supplied further evidence: it had demonstrated that Apollo was identical to Mars, whom he regarded as a solar god. In a partly circular argument, Roscher held that it followed that Apollo must have been a solar god too.³⁸² Likewise, in his 1875 study of Juno and Hera Roscher held that the principal argument for viewing Hera as a moon-goddess was her identity with the moon-goddess Juno.³⁸³ We recall how for earlier advocates of Indo-European Comparative Mythology like Max Müller the presumed identity of the Greek gods with the gods of the Veda confirmed their elemental nature.

Roscher's writings exemplify the tendency to derive all the functions of the Greek gods from a single physical *Grundidee* at its most extreme. In the case of Apollo, Roscher characteristically claimed that 'most aspects of the god in cult and myth can only be explained by the view that he was a solar deity'.³⁸⁴ In his view, Apollo's military function derived from the conception of the sun-god as an armed hero; his association with agriculture from the importance of the sun for the growth of vegetation; his medical function from the notion that the sun was a source of health; conversely, his plague-sending

³⁸⁰ Roscher (1873), p. 93.

³⁸¹ Roscher (1873), pp. 16–7, cf. Versnel (1994), p. 290. In France, Decharme likewise argued that 'Apollon, à une époque ancienne de sa religion, a été un dieu solaire'. Decharme (1879), p. xxiv.

³⁸² W.H. Roscher, 'Apollon' (1884a), *Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie*, vol. I (Leipzig: Teubner, 1884–1886), pp. 422–49 at p. 422.

³⁸³ Roscher (1875a), pp. 2, 27.

³⁸⁴ Roscher (1873), p. 16.

aspect from the notion that the hot summer sun was a source of disease. Apollo was associated with the sea because during the summer the sea became navigable. Roscher further suggested that the slaying of Python symbolized the victory of the sun-god over the power of winter, and so on.³⁸⁵ In a similar manner, Roscher held that most aspects of Hera were to be explained via reference to her origins as a moon-goddess, of Athena via reference to her origins as a cloud- and storm-goddess, of Hermes as a wind-god, and so forth.³⁸⁶

The writings of Roscher provide a further example of the resonance of physical interpretations of Greek religion with contemporary attitudes towards nature. In an essay bearing the revealing title *Das tiefe Naturgefühl der Griechen und Römer in seiner historischen Entwicklung* (1875), Roscher argued against Schiller's view that, in contrast to modern romantic attitudes, ancient attitudes towards nature tended to be emotionally detached. Roscher asserted that the ancients possessed a deep feeling for nature which, in the earliest times, found expression in their myths. Thus he maintained that the majority of Greek myths like the myths of related peoples such as the Indians or the Germans had emerged out of a 'most extraordinary, profound and peculiar feeling for nature'.³⁸⁷ He further reiterated Preller's view of ancient myths as 'most beautiful nature-poetry' and as attesting to such sympathy between nature and man 'as felt in our days at most by the poet or the enthused natural scientist and natural philosopher'.³⁸⁸ It should be noted that specifically as regards Apollo, Roscher maintained that his myth and cult as a sun- and spring-god displayed 'very beautiful and magnificent views of nature'.³⁸⁹ As in the case of his predecessors in the physical tradition it is thus arguable that Roscher's own feeling for nature encouraged him to advance physical interpretations.

Roscher's interpretive one-sidedness exposed him to heavy criticism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and arguably contributed to the discrediting of physical interpretations in general. Farnell would say of Roscher's methodology in the first volume of his *Cults* in 1896: 'one cannot help feeling the unreality

³⁸⁵ Roscher (1873), pp. 6, 40-1, 43, 60ff., 70, cf. Versnel (1994), p. 290.

³⁸⁶ Roscher (1875a), p. 2, W.H. Roscher, *Nektar und Ambrosia* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1883), pp. 93-106, Roscher (1878), pp. 4-6.

³⁸⁷ Roscher (1875b), p. 4.

³⁸⁸ Roscher (1875b), p. 4.

³⁸⁹ Roscher (1875b), p. 6.

of this, which seems the *reductio ad absurdum* of the physical-allegorical theory.³⁹⁰

The focus of criticism on the shortcomings of Roscher's approach has diverted attention from one of the most interesting aspects of his work, namely his collection of material on the role of numbers in the worship of the Greek gods and especially of Apollo.³⁹¹ In such studies as 'Zur Bedeutung der Siebenzahl im Kultus und Mythos der Griechen' (1901) or *Die Sieben- und Neunzahl im Kultus und Mythos der Griechen* (1904) Roscher, drawing on Plutarch, examined the role of the numbers seven and nine in the worship of Apollo. He underlined that Apollo's birthday fell on the seventh of the month and that periods of seven and nine days and years were recurrent in his worship. In Roscher's view, the importance of the numbers seven and nine derived from the measurement of time on the basis of the seven- and nine-day phases of the moon. Roscher noted that, in addition to the seventh day of each month, the *νομηνία*, the *διχομηνία*, the *εἰκάς* and the *τριακάς*, all the important days therefore for the division of the lunar month, were sacred to Apollo. For Roscher, this suggested that Apollo was conceived as 'lord of the solar year and of all related natural divisions of time'. That function was naturally associated with him as solar god in the light of the fact that measurement of time was based on observation of the annual course of the sun.³⁹² Irrespective of the explanation he provided, in calling attention to the importance of the numbers seven and nine in the worship of Apollo and in maintaining that sacred days were not randomly picked, but were related to the character of the gods, Roscher touched on issues which have tended to be under-discussed in the discipline.³⁹³

³⁹⁰ Farnell (1896a), p. 8.

³⁹¹ Cf. Bonnet (1997), p. 424.

³⁹² W.H. Roscher, 'Die Sieben- und Neunzahl im Kultus und Mythos der Griechen', *Abhandlungen der Philologisch-Historischen Klasse der Königlich Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, vol. 24 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1904), pp. 3–126 at pp. 3–19, Roscher (1873), p. 20, W.H. Roscher, *Die Hebdomadenlehren der Griechischen Philosophen und Ärzte* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1906), p. 7.

³⁹³ An important predecessor in nineteenth-century scholarship in this area was Bachoffen. In *Das Mutterrecht*, he portrayed the number seven as a symbol of the principle of Apolline *Vatterrecht*, which he associated with the sun, as opposed to the number five, a symbol of the principle of *Mutterrecht*, which he associated with the moon: J.J. Bachoffen, *Das Mutterrecht. Eine Untersuchung über die Gynaiokratie der alten Welt nach ihrer religiösen und rechtlichen Natur* (Stuttgart: Kraiss and Hoffmann, 1861), pp. 58–62. As we saw, Roscher, unlike Bachoffen, related number

Roscher's influence was most strongly felt through the *Ausführliches Lexikon* (1884–1937). As long as he lived Roscher was its editor and the contributor of several articles including those on Apollo, Athena, Hera and Hermes.³⁹⁴ The *Lexikon* was a major example of the grand collaborative projects of nineteenth-century German scholarship.³⁹⁵ It was intended to provide a comprehensive treatment of classical mythology that would take into account the latest developments in archaeology, iconography and epigraphy and brought together the leading specialists of German scholarship of the time.³⁹⁶ More than that, it served as a vehicle for protest against the waning influence of classical models on contemporary German culture.³⁹⁷ As a collective long-running project, the *Lexikon* hosted a

seven to the moon. In twentieth-century scholarship, Nilsson's study *Die Entstehung und religiöse Bedeutung des Griechischen Kalenders* (1918) is fundamental. Nilsson acknowledged Roscher's monographs as the *Hauptwerk* for the significance of seven- and nine-day periods in Greek worship. He further considered the special importance that the number seven had in Apolline cults, for a detailed discussion of which he again referred the reader to Roscher. In Nilsson's view, however, the prominence of the number seven in the worship of Apollo pointed to Near Eastern origins. It ultimately derived from Babylonian religion and the association of the seventh day of the month with Apolline purification- and expiation rituals corresponded to the Babylonian sibutu taboo day which also fell on the seventh of the month: M.P. Nilsson, *Die Entstehung und religiöse Bedeutung des Griechischen Kalenders* (Lund: Gleerup, 1962, second edition), pp. 34, n.1, 38–49. For a recent examination of Apollo's association with the seventh day of the month as well as Nilsson's account of it see Graf (2009), p. 140.

³⁹⁴ Roscher was alive until the *Lexikon* reached the letter 'T': 'Nachwort', *Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie*, vol. VI (Leipzig/Berlin: Teubner, 1924–1937).

³⁹⁵ C. Bonnet, *Le «Grand Atelier de la Science»*, vol. I (Brussels: Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome, 2005), p. 237.

³⁹⁶ W.H. Roscher, 'Vorrede' (1889), *Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie*, vol. I (Leipzig: Teubner, 1884–1890), pp. v–viii at p.v, Bonnet (2005), p. 237.

³⁹⁷ In the foreword to the second part of the third volume in 1908, Roscher attributed the problems and delays in the continuation of the *Lexikon* to the *Ungust der Gegenwart*. This consisted in the 'immer noch zunehmenden Abkehr von den bisherigen Grundlagen unserer höheren Bildung und Kultur, d. h. dem klassischen Altertum, der Renaissance und unseren eigenen Klassikern auf den Gebieten der Literatur und Kunst'. Roscher went on to express his disgust at the direction modern art was taking as, for instance, at the 1908 Dresden exhibition: 'Wie nahe wir z. B. bereits auf dem Gebiete der Kunst dem Abgrunde der Barbarei, Geschmacklosigkeit, Platttheit zugeglitten sind, zeigt jede 'moderne' Kunstaussstellung, z.B. die jüngste Dresdener.' W.H. Roscher, 'Vorrede', *Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie*, vol. III (Leipzig: Teubner, 1897–1909), zweite Abteilung (1908), pp. v–vi at p. v, note **. Wilamowitz likewise argued that 'without Greek,

range of different views and approaches. In the articles that Roscher contributed, he reiterated the physical interpretations that he had put forward in his earlier monographs. Thus he opened his article on Apollo repeating 'that Apollo had originally the significance of a light-and sun-god can be considered as one of the most secure facts of mythology'³⁹⁸ and that 'most aspects of the god in cult and myth can indeed only be explained by the view that he was a solar deity'.³⁹⁹ Although over time the physical aspect was watered down,⁴⁰⁰ the *Lexikon* can be seen as the last grand bastion of the method of physical interpretation.⁴⁰¹

With the demise of physical interpretations, the romantic vision of Greek religion largely vanished from scholarship, giving way to the practical, agrarian interpretations of Greek rituals of scholars influenced by folklore studies and anthropology and later to emphatically social accounts of religion in the context of the Greek polis.

German *Bildung* . . . goes to rack and ruin' quoted in Marchand (1996), p. 136. On the increasing challenge to the idealization of Greece and its privileged role in German culture from the late nineteenth century onwards see ch. 4, 'Trouble in Olympus' Marchand (1996), pp. 116–51.

³⁹⁸ Roscher (1884a), p. 422. Cf. 'la nature solaire d'Apollon, qui, contestée jadis par Otfried Müller, est aujourd'hui à peu près universellement reconnue': Decharme (1879), p. 95.

³⁹⁹ Roscher, (1884a), p. 422. Similarly in his article on Athena he reiterated that, like her Germanic 'counterpart', the Valkyre, she was 'ursprünglich für eine Göttin der Wetterwolke und des daraus hervorspringenden Blitzes zu halten'. W.H. Roscher, 'Athene' (1884b), *Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie*, vol. I (Leipzig: Teubner, 1884–1886), pp. 675–87 at p. 675.

⁴⁰⁰ Farnell noted that 'As the *Lexikon* has been continuously growing for many years, a marked improvement is found in the later articles in regard to scientific handling of the material; the monotonous hypotheses, once so prevalent, of the physico-symbolical school, have given place to a saner and broader theory'. L.R. Farnell, 'Greek Mythology and Religion', *The Year's Work in Classical Studies* (London: Murray, 1906–7), pp. 44–52 at pp. 44–5.

⁴⁰¹ Burkert (1980), p. 168, Bonnet (2005), p. 237.

Stammesgötter and Universal Gods

The Historical-Critical Approach

As we mentioned, the historical-critical approach to Greek religion constituted for a great part of the nineteenth century the principal rival of physical interpretations in German scholarship,¹ providing a more sustained opposition than the continuators of rationalist criticism like Lehrs. Its best-known representative is K.O. Müller (1797–1840). Through the writings of H.D. Müller and E. Curtius who were heavily influenced by K.O. Müller's views, the historical-critical approach reached into the 1890s. As we shall see, the criticism levelled against physical interpretations by the advocates of the historical-critical approach ranged from objections over methodology to a fundamental disagreement over the nature of religion.

I. THE DORIAN APOLLO OF KARL OTFRIED MÜLLER (1797–1840)

'Historian and critic, geographer and ethnographer, archaeologist and mythologist, editor and professor', Karl Otfried Müller was, in the words of his translator, K. Hillebrand, 'the most universal of German philologists' of the first half of the nineteenth century.² In

¹ Cf. Bloch (1905), p. 450.

² K. Hillebrand, *Histoire de la Littérature Grecque par Otfried Müller*, vol. I (Paris: Durand, 1866), p. xxvii. On Hillebrand's translation of K.O. Müller's *History of Greek Literature* see M. Espagne, 'De Heyne à Lachmann. Biographies héroïques de philologues allemands', in C. König and D. Thouard (eds.), *La Philologie au Présent*

the field of Greek religion he is, as we mentioned, the most famous representative of the 'historical-critical' approach.

Karl Otfried Müller was born in Brieg in Silesia in 1797, the eldest son of a Protestant pastor. As Foerster noted, the pious familial environment contributed to the development of his interest in religion.³ K.O. Müller started his studies in 1814 at the University of Breslau. In 1816, he attended the University of Berlin where he came under the formative influence of A. Böckh, leading advocate of the historical and universal approach to *Altertumswissenschaft*, of Schleiermacher, and of the philosopher K.F. Solger (1780–1819).⁴ In 1819 at the age of twenty two he succeeded Welcker as professor of *Altertumswissenschaft* in Göttingen, a position which he held to the end of his life. He died in Greece in 1840 from a fever he contracted while copying inscriptions at Delphi.⁵

In a letter written in 1830 K.O. Müller stated: 'I do not consciously miss any opportunity to warm and animate myself religiously. Nevertheless, given the way I am, I would consider it a terrible crime against myself, to decide suddenly to throw myself to the arms of faith. It would be a renunciation of the interrelation and continuity of my logical or, if you will, rational thought.'⁶ As will be seen, elements of both attitudes can be discerned in his approach to Greek religion.

(Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Septentrion, 2010c), pp. 127–39. On K.O. Müller's broad-ranging scholarly interests see W. Unte, 'Karl Otfried Müller', in W.W. Briggs and W.M. Calder III (eds.), *Classical Scholarship: a Biographical Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland, 1990), pp. 310–20 at pp. 313, 316–17 and the collection of essays in *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* XIV (3), 1984, pp. 893–1226, and Calder/Schlesier (1998).

³ R. Foerster, *Otfried Müller* (Breslau: Marcus, 1897), p. 12. The religious and intellectual profile of K.O. Müller is examined in a diptych of articles by J.H. Blok with an emphasis on Pietist influences: Blok (1994) and J.H. Blok, "'Romantische Poesie, Naturphilosophie, Konstruktion der Geschichte': K.O. Müller's Understanding of History and Myth", in Calder/Schlesier (1998), pp. 55–97. On K.O. Müller's Protestant background see further A. Wittenburg, 'I Dori di K.O. Müller', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* XIV (3), 1984, pp. 1031–44 at p. 1034.

⁴ E. Müller, 'Biographische Erinnerungen an Karl Otfried Müller', in E. Müller (ed.), *Karl Otfried Müller, Kleine Deutsche Schriften*, vol. I (Breslau: Max and Komp, 1847), pp. vii–lxxviii at pp. xix–xxii, Unte (1990), p. 311.

⁵ Unte (1990), p. 317.

⁶ 'obgleich ich wissentlich keine Gelegenheit versäume, mich religiös zu erwärmen und zu beleben: so würde ich es doch für ein furchtbares Verbrechen gegen mich halten, mich durch einen plötzlichen Entschluß, wie ich jetzt bin, dem Glauben in die Arme zu werfen, und dadurch auf den Zusammenhang und die Continuität meines vernünftigen oder wenn man will verständigen Denkens zu resigniren.' K.O. Müller to

The historical-critical approach to the study of Greek religion was based on the premise that Greek polytheism was the end-product of a long process of historical development. Looking back at the course of the discipline from the vantage-point of 1894, Ernst Curtius, a student of K.O. Müller, laid stress on the broader historicist trend in the first decades of the nineteenth century, according to which the objects of historical study were to be approached in terms of their historical development or *Werden*. He mentioned K.O. Müller and Niebuhr as two of its foremost representatives in Greek and Roman historiography respectively.⁷ In particular, K.O. Müller held that Greek polytheism had been the historical result of the gradual unification of the worships of the various Greek communities and, especially, of the Greek tribes. He attributed its apparent uniformity to the later impact of sanctuaries of Panhellenic influence like Delphi and of poetry.⁸ Both an interest in the religious traditions of local Greek communities and Greek tribes as well as the view that Greek polytheism emerged out of the joining of the worships of local gods can be found in earlier scholarship.⁹ However, in the work of K.O. Müller these aspects received a new emphasis which would prove very influential.¹⁰ The focus on the worships of the Greek tribes should be seen against the background of a broader interest in the differences among the Greek tribes in the period.¹¹ In his account of Greece in *Ideen zur*

Elvers, 7 July 1830, n. 58, in O. Kern, *Aus dem amtlichen und wissenschaftlichen Briefwechsel von Carl Otfried Müller* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1936), p. 123.

⁷ E. Curtius, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, vol. II (Berlin: Hertz, 1894), pp. iii–iv.

⁸ K.O. Müller (1825), pp. 238–9, 241.

⁹ Thus Heyne's several studies of local Greek communities included religious aspects. On Heyne's interest in the worship of local gods see Heidenreich (2006), p. 450. An interest in the worships of Greek tribes is further visible in Buttmann's *Mythologus*, vol. II (Berlin: Mylius, 1829). In his *Handbuch der Mythologie*, M.G. Hermann suggested that polytheism was created through the coming together of the gods of local communities: M.G. Hermann (1787), p. 3. Buttmann also maintained that polytheisms tended to start with small pantheons: Buttmann (1828), p. 5.

¹⁰ For Curtius, 'Otfried Müllers Verdienst ist es, die griechischen Stämme als Träger gewisser Gottesdienste nachgewiesen und dadurch zwischen Volksgeschichte und Mythologie eine fruchtbare Verbindung hergestellt zu haben.' Curtius (1875a), p. 51. According to Wilamowitz, 'daß die Griechen kein einheitliches Volk waren, sondern aus sehr verschiedenen begabten Stämmen zusammengewachsen, dies in der Geschichte, der Struktur der Gesellschaft, in Glaube und Sage zu verfolgen, ist Müllers Großtat.' Wilamowitz (1921) [1998], p. 57.

¹¹ For a modern examination of the tribal divisions of the Greeks see J.M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit (1784–91), for example, Herder had pointed to tribal differences.¹² Moreover, in his study of Greek poetry F. Schlegel had distinguished between an Ionian and a Dorian school and suggested that they reflected sharp contrasts in character.¹³ As Dilthey noted, Schleiermacher had also drawn attention to tribal contrasts in his lectures and under his influence Böckh conceived the plan of a history of the Greek tribes. This plan K.O. Müller would attempt to carry out.¹⁴

In his *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie* (1825) K.O. Müller put forward the view that 'every cult, with its own history, originally expresses the religious emotion in a certain generality [in einer gewissen Allgemeinheit], and in many respects this is sufficient for the tribe which practises it'.¹⁵ K.O. Müller's focus on religious emotion suggests the influence of his compatriot and teacher at Berlin, F. Schleiermacher.¹⁶ We should note that K.O. Müller's view that a 'general feeling of the Divine' provided the basis of cult was intended to refute the theories of earlier scholars like Creuzer that the cults of ancient gods were based on specific physical or ethical dogmata.¹⁷ As we shall see, H.D. Müller and E. Curtius built on K.O. Müller's thesis to claim that the Greek tribes had originally worshipped single, universal gods, making in effect a case for *Urmonotheismus*. In his *Prolegomena*, however, K.O. Müller himself emphatically rejected the notion of a strict Greek *Urmonotheismus*.¹⁸

¹² Schmidt (1985), pp. 330–63.

¹³ F. Schlegel, 'Von der Schulen der griechischen Poesie' (1794), in E. Behler (ed.), *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, vol. I (Munich: Schöningh, 1979), pp. 3–18 at pp. 5–9. K. Dilthey, *Otfried Müller* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1898), p. 19.

¹⁴ Dilthey (1898), p. 19.

¹⁵ K.O. Müller (1825), p. 243. In the section on mythology in the *nachgelassene Schriften* of K.O. Müller's teacher, Solger, which was edited by K.O. Müller, appears the view that 'sich in jeder Gottheit das ganze allgemeine göttliche Wesen individualisierte' and that each place had its own *Hauptgottheit*, 'in welcher sich für dasselbe das ganze Göttersystem besonders darstellte, und in welcher es sein ganzes Lebensprincip fand' L. Tieck and F. von Raumer (eds.), *Solger's nachgelassene Schriften und Briefwechsel*, vol. II (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1826), p. 712. Cf. Gruppe (1921), p. 154. Hegel as well argued that 'Jeder Lokalgott hat in seiner Bestimmung von Lokalität zugleich die Bedeutung der Allgemeinheit'. Hegel (1969), p. 147.

¹⁶ E. Müller (1847), pp. xxxviii–ix, xlii. On the importance for nineteenth-century German scholars of Greek religion of Schleiermacher's approach to religion in terms of emotion see Schlesier (2003), pp. 1–3.

¹⁷ K.O. Müller (1825), p. 243.

¹⁸ 'Aus diesen Bemerkungen folgt aber keineswegs ein eigentlicher strenger Monotheismus der ursprünglichen Griechischen Götterverehrung, der bei der zum Grunde

Nevertheless, he argued that, as was natural in every faith, a striving after unity [*Streben nach Einheit*] was observable in Greek religion: 'In the cults from which faith in the gods grew, the relationship between the individual gods was that of limbs to the body, forming a whole... Later, popular belief produced a community of gods under a single ruler, who, particularly once it had been identified with fate in general, rose to become an actual divinity itself.'¹⁹ As we noted in the case of Preller, the fact that even scholars who were opposed to the notion of *Urmonotheismus* were inclined to place emphasis on the theme of monotheistic elements in Greek religion attests to the pervasiveness of Christian influence in the scholarship of the period.

As mentioned, under Böckh's influence, K.O. Müller conceived the plan of writing a 'total' history of the Greeks, the *Geschichten der Hellenischen Stämme und Städte*.²⁰ This ambitious project remained incomplete. K.O. Müller did produce, however, such studies as on the Minyans of Orchomenos in 1820 and what is arguably his most celebrated work, *Die Dorier* in 1824. In the latter, he put forward a broad-ranging examination of Dorian culture from political institutions to art to religion.²¹ In his study of Dorian religion K.O. Müller concentrated on the worship of Apollo and Artemis whom he regarded as the two main Dorian gods.²²

I focus on K.O. Müller's account of Apollo which constitutes a landmark treatment of the god in nineteenth-century scholarship.²³ K.O. Müller began by attempting to refute the view that Apollo had been a god of the indigenous Pelasgian population of Greece or that his worship had been introduced to Greece from the East. He alleged

liegenden Weltansicht kaum möglich war.' 'Die alten Griechen, die in allem Leben der Körperwelt, wie in jeder bedeutenden Aeusserung des Geistigen, das Dämonische sahen... konnten nach Erfahrung und Gefühl kaum anders als eine Mehrheit jener Prinzipie annehmen.' K.O. Müller (1825), pp. 244–5. Cf. Gruppe (1921), pp. 159–60.

¹⁹ K.O. Müller (1825), p. 245.

²⁰ Unte (1990), p. 313.

²¹ Unte (1990), p. 313.

²² K.O. Müller, *Geschichten Hellenischer Stämme und Städte: Die Dorier*, vol. II (Breslau: Max, 1824), p. 199. K.O. Müller did not argue in *Die Dorier* for a Dorian *Urmonotheismus* with Apollo as the single god as suggested in É. Kociszky, 'Karl Ottfried Müller and the "Patriotic" Study of Religion', in Klaniczay (2011), pp. 513–26 at pp. 515, 521.

²³ See also M. Konaris, 'Apollo in Nineteenth-century Scholarship: the Case of K.O. Müller', in M. Haysom and J. Wallensten (eds.), *Current Approaches to Religion in Ancient Greece*, (Stockholm: Svenska institutet i Athen, 2011), pp. 13–22.

that the dominant position of the worship of Apollo in all Dorian areas and the 'demonstrably' Dorian origins of all of its major institutions conclusively established that Apollo had by origin been a genuinely Greek god and specifically a Dorian *Stammesgott*. In his opinion, his worship had been propagated in the Greek world with the expansion of Dorian settlements.²⁴ The theory that Apollo's origins were Greek and Dorian may be seen as representative of the broader thrust in K.O. Müller's work in favour of the national autonomy of Greek culture. From the realm of religion to the sciences and the arts, K.O. Müller mounted a sustained attack against the view that the older civilizations of the Near East had exercised powerful, formative influence on the younger civilization of Greece—a view, which as we have seen, symbolist scholars like Dupuis or Creuzer were advocating in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Already in 1819 K.O. Müller tellingly stated in a letter to Böckh that he had declared open war to the *Morgenländern*—as the proponents of theories of Oriental origins were pejoratively known.²⁵ In *Black Athena* Bernal asserted that this subversion of historiographical orthodoxy went against the testimony of the Greeks themselves and should be understood in terms of K.O. Müller's racism against the peoples of Asia and Africa. He further maintained that K.O. Müller's attitude was emblematic of the role of racism in nineteenth-century European historiography.²⁶ In her article 'Proof and Persuasion in *Black Athena*: the Case of K.O. Müller' Blok argued that Bernal failed to demonstrate that K.O. Müller had been motivated by racism.²⁷ An examination of K.O. Müller's stance on the question of the origins of

²⁴ K.O. Müller II (1824), pp. 199–202.

²⁵ K.O. Müller to A. Böckh, Breslau, 28 March 1819, in A. Böckh, *Briefwechsel zwischen August Böckh und Karl Otfried Müller* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1883), p. 33. Cf. Kociszky (2011), p. 518.

²⁶ 'For 18th- and 19th- century Romantics and racists it was simply intolerable for Greece, which was seen not merely as the epitome of Europe but also as its pure childhood, to have been the result of the mixture of native Europeans and colonizing Africans and Semites' [Bernal refers to this as the 'Ancient Model']. Bernal (1987), p. 2, '... the man who destroyed the Ancient Model, Karl Otfried Müller. Müller urged scholars to study Greek mythology in relation to human culture as a whole, but was adamantly opposed to recognizing any specific borrowings from the East.' Bernal (1987), p. 4. Cf. Bernal (1987), pp. 308–16. On Bernal's ascription of racism to K.O. Müller see J.H. Blok, 'Proof and Persuasion in *Black Athena*: the Case of K.O. Müller', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57 (4), 1996, pp. 705–24, Williamson (2004), pp. 145–50.

²⁷ Blok (1996), pp. 707, 713ff.

Greek religion can contribute evidence to the issue.²⁸ Like other scholars on Greek religion of his generation such as Forchhammer, K.O. Müller sought to counter theories which had currency at the time and according to which Greek myths and cults essentially derived in their entirety from the East.²⁹ As H.D. Müller noted in the 1850s, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, 'one tended to attribute to the Orient such an influence on the development of Hellenic culture in general and Hellenic religion in particular, that very little was left to the Hellenes as their own. At best they were credited with further developing what they received from abroad so that it fitted in with their national spirit.'³⁰ By contrast, for K.O. Müller Greek religion was to be studied primarily in the context of Greek history and geography. Under the influence of Herder, he regarded Greek religion as the creation of the Greek people and as a reflection of their own spirit.³¹ Even contemporary scholars criticized K.O. Müller for going too far in his reaction. In response, K.O. Müller sought to clarify that his rejection, for example, of theories of the

²⁸ Cf. the discussion in Williamson (2004), pp. 145–50.

²⁹ K.O. Müller, Review of Preller's *Demeter und Persephone* (1840a), in E. Müller (ed.), *Karl Otfried Müller, Kleine Deutsche Schriften*, vol. II (Breslau: Max, 1848), pp. 89–99 at p. 98. Cf. Bernal (1987), p. 313, Kocziszky (2011), p. 518.

³⁰ H.D. Müller, *Mythologie der Griechischen Stämme*, first part (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1857), p. 116. Roughly at the same time Schömann referred to a *certain idiosynracy* 'der es nun einmal Bedürfniss ist, in Griechenland den Orient wiederzufinden. Solcher Idionsynkrasie dürfen wir denn auch die wahrhaft staunenswerthe Behauptung zuschreiben, dass nicht bloss einzelne Institute, Kenntnisse, Erfindungen den Griechen aus dem Orient zugekommen, was Niemand leugnet [my emphasis], sondern dass überhaupt die gesammte Bildung der Griechen den Mittheilungen der früher gebildeten Orientalen zu verdanken sei. Namentlich die Religionsvorstellungen sollen sämtlich aus dem Orient, und zwar besonders aus Aegypten zu den Griechen gekommen sein; die griechische Mythologie soll nicht anders als die entstellte Fratze eines von der ägyptischen Priesterweisheit ausgebildeten Systems sein . . . so dass Aegypten das Mutterland aller griechischen und somit aller abendländischen Philosophie überhaupt anzuerkennen sei.' G.F. Schömann, *Griechische Alterthümer*, vol. I (Berlin: Weidmann, 1855), pp. 14–15.

³¹ On Herder's influence on K.O. Müller through Solger see Gruppe (1921), p. 153, Feldman/Richardson (1972), p. 416, Hall (1998), pp. 7–8. In calling attention to geography, K.O. Müller offers a further example of the impact on classical scholarship of contemporary geographers and thinkers like Ritter and Solger. On Ritter's influence on K.O. Müller see Gehrke (2003). On the influence of Solger see further G. Arrigoni, 'Il Maestro del Maestro e i Loro Continuatori: Mitologia e Simbolismo Animale in Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand Solger, Karl Otfried Müller e Dopo', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa XIV* (3), 1984, pp. 937–1019, and G. Pinna, 'Alle Origini degli Studi Mitologici di K.O. Müller: Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand Solger', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa XIV* (3), 1984, pp. 1021–9.

Phoenician origins of Greek religion did not mean that he stood 'in absolute opposition to everything Oriental in ancient Greece': 'far from denying a lively interplay between Greece and the Orient, he [referring to himself] merely calls for acknowledging that the religious thought and emotions of the ancient Greeks . . . was peculiarly modified; acknowledging that they possessed a capacity to create as well as recreate.'³² In a letter to Forchhammer K.O. Müller further consented that 'as regards the influence of the Orient, one should keep his eyes and ears open for it' and stated that he had begun to pay particular attention to the trade- and cultural routes of Asia Minor.³³ In addition, K.O. Müller had a long-standing interest in the study of Egyptian antiquity and tried to keep abreast of the latest developments in the field.³⁴ In the same letter to Forchhammer he expressed the view that the study of the Egyptian religion was still in too infant a state to allow a judgment on whether Greek mythology derived from it: 'We are still scratching the surface as far as our understanding of the inner substance of Egyptian religion is concerned; as a consequence we do not have anything to build on in deducing links to Greek mythology . . . However, recent discoveries [i.e. Champollion's decipherment of hieroglyphics] pertaining to that religion's outer substance, attributes etc., have truly put more distance between the Egyptian and Greek pantheons than there was before.'³⁵ There is a parallel here with Welcker's point that advances in linguistics exposed the error of Egyptian etymologies of Greek divine names.³⁶ However, in his early essay 'Ueber den angeblich ägyptischen Ursprung der griechischen Kunst' K.O. Müller also stated that, although Egyptian

³² K.O. Müller, Review of Böttiger's *Ideen zur Kunstmythologie*, in E. Müller II (1848), pp. 46–54 at p. 53. Cf. K.O. Müller (1840a), p. 98.

³³ K.O. Müller to Forchhammer, 9 June 1831, n. 116, in S. Reiter, *Carl Otfried Müller. Briefe aus einem Gelehrtenleben 1797–1840*, vol. I (Berlin: Akademie, 1950), p. 153.

³⁴ 'So suche ich, so viel möglich, den neuen Entdeckungen in Aegyptischer Literatur nachzukommen, und lese wenigstens alles dahin einschlagende': K.O. Müller to Böckh, Göttingen, 5 July 1825, in Böckh (1883), pp. 168–9, E. Müller (1847), p. iv, Blok (1996), pp. 705–6.

³⁵ 'Für Alles, was das Innre der Ägyptischen Religion betrifft, stehen wir noch ganz in den Vorhallen; und zu einer Deduction der Griechischen Mythologie fehlen uns die ersten Anknüpfungspunkte. Was aber das Äussre, Attribute u. dgl. betrifft: so ist doch wahrlich gerade durch die neueren Entdeckungen das Ägyptische Pantheon dem Griechischen noch weiter weg getreten als vorher.' K.O. Müller to Forchhammer, 9 June 1831, n. 116, in Reiter I (1950), p. 154.

³⁶ Welcker (1857), p. 10.

art may have influenced the Greek at the level of technique, 'a more noble race will always prevail over a lesser one, and in every higher spiritual activity the weak and cowardly Egyptians were certainly far inferior to the young Hellenic people'.³⁷ We may compare Welcker's contemptuous dismissal of Semitic influences on Greek religion.³⁸ It is significant that the defence of the national origins of Greek culture spearheaded by K.O. Müller was largely presented in methodological terms. Nevertheless, statements such as those quoted above indicate that racial prejudices also played a part.³⁹ In the same direction point the strong reactions to those scholars who challenged what was referred to as the *Müllerische Exklusivität*.⁴⁰ As we saw, Bernal attributed to K.O. Müller the destruction of the 'Ancient Model'. In fact, as Vick points out, theories of substantial Near Eastern influences on Greek culture continued to be advanced in German scholarship for decades after the appearance of K.O. Müller's work.⁴¹ Prominent advocates included the archaeologists L. Ross and E. Curtius.⁴² As

³⁷ 'In jeder höhern Geistesthätigkeit standen die unkräftigen und feigen Aegyptier dem jugendlichen Hellenenvolke gewiß bei Weitem nach, wie es eine edlere Race stets über die unedlere gewinnt'. K.O. Müller, 'Ueber den angeblich ägyptischen Ursprung der griechischen Kunst' (1820), in E. Müller II (1848), pp. 523–37 at p. 536. Cf. Williamson (2004), p. 146.

³⁸ As we saw, Welcker asserted that 'Nicht von jenen Handelsleuten [the Phoenicians] konnten die Griechen lernen was zur Begründung einer Cultur nöthig ist: aus den Blüthen und Früchten der Hellenischen Cultur, deren gleichen bei jenen nicht bekannt ist, muß auf die Wurzel geschlossen werden und der Arische Stamm ist in Geist und Anlagen nicht unter dem der Semiten'. Welcker (1857), p. 117.

³⁹ Cf. Williamson (2004), p. 150. Williamson concludes his discussion by suggesting that 'while race undoubtedly played a role in the thinking of Voss and Müller, it must be seen as part of a broader complex of motives'. See also Marchand (1996), p. 44.

⁴⁰ The expression belongs to K.F. Hermann, K.O. Müller's successor at Göttingen, in the context of his dispute with Ross over the extent of Eastern influences on Greece: L. Ross, 'Morgenland und Griechenland', *Archäologische Aufsätze*, vol. II (Leipzig: Teubner, 1861), pp. 1–52 at p. 16.

⁴¹ Vick (2002), pp. 484, 498. Vick suggests that a shift of emphasis towards 'isolationist' views on the issue of Greek cultural autonomy occurred in the last decades of the nineteenth century rather than in its beginnings. He relates it to the growing role of racist doctrines in the European public sphere of the time: Vick (2002), pp. 499–500.

⁴² On Ross and his views on Oriental influences on Greek culture see K. Fittschen, 'Griechenland und das Orient—Ludwig Ross gegen Karl Otfried Müller', in H.R. Goette and O. Palagia (eds.), *Ludwig Ross und Griechenland* (Westfalen: Leidorf, 2005), pp. 251–61. Among those unconvinced by K.O. Müller's views was Nietzsche: 'How far from the Greeks one must be to ascribe to them the stupid autochthony of

we shall see, the latter spoke of a 'sacred duty' of philologists to defend the autochthony of Greek culture.⁴³

To return to K.O. Müller's account of Apollo, in addition to demonstrating that his origins were Greek and specifically Dorian, one of K.O. Müller's primary aims was to refute the view that Apollo was a nature-god and in particular a solar god.⁴⁴ A letter of K.O. Müller to L. Schorn indicates that in contesting the solar interpretation of Apollo his target was once again Creuzer: 'in the next volume, which will treat the Dorian tribe and the worship of Apollo and Artemis, I am considering a declaration of brutal *ad internecionem* war on him [Creuzer] and namely to cast out the sun-god not only, for example, from Homeric poetry [like Voss], but also from the Delphic-Delian-Dorian cult . . . In the Dorian Apollo I am conscious of having discovered a far more uplifting and greater idea than anything which could be suggested by a comparison with the Babylonian Bel.'⁴⁵ Like Voss and also like his teacher, Solger,⁴⁶ K.O. Müller opposed to Creuzer's Oriental and solar Apollo, a purely Greek, ethical Apollo. As in the case of Voss, K.O. Müller's disagreement with Creuzer over the interpretation of Apollo is emblematic of crucial differences in their approach to Greek religion and not least in their attitudes towards the worship of nature-gods and mysticism.⁴⁷ In

Otfried Müller!': 5 [114] in W. Arrowsmith, 'Nietzsche: Notes for "We Philologists"', *Arion* 1/2, 1973/74, pp. 279–380 at p. 328.

⁴³ On comparable reactions to Ross see Fittschen (2005), p. 252.

⁴⁴ K.O. Müller II (1824), pp. 284ff. He likewise argued that Dorian Artemis was not originally a lunar nature-goddess: K.O. Müller II (1824), p. 371.

⁴⁵ K.O. Müller to Schorn, Göttingen, mid-January 1821, n. 13, in S. Reiter, 'Briefwechsel zwischen Karl Otfried Müller und Ludwig Schorn', *Neue Jahrbücher für das Klassische Altertum, Geschichte und Deutsche Literatur und für Pädagogik* 26, 1910, pp. 340–60 at p. 344.

⁴⁶ On Solger's rejection of an Oriental, solar Apollo see Arrigoni (1984), p. 955. In the mythological section in Solger's *nachgelassene Schriften*, which, as mentioned, was edited by K.O. Müller, Apollo and Artemis did not appear as nature-deities, but rather as 'Ideale des individuellen, zur Idee und Schönheit aufstrebenden Lebens, die höchste und schönste Ausbildung desselben'. In an early instance of an emphasis on Apollo's association with the young, the writer further states: 'Daraus läßt sich alles erklären, Apollons Jugend und Schönheit (die ihn zum Beschützer der Jugend, zum *θεὸς κούροτρόφος* macht).' Tieck/Raumer II (1826), p. 704.

⁴⁷ On the similarities and differences between K.O. Müller's and Creuzer's approach to Greek religion see Blok (1994) and (1998), Williamson (2004), pp. 145–7. Momigliano focuses on their differences: A. Momigliano, 'Karl Otfried Müllers *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie* und die Bedeutung von »Mythos«, in Most (2000), pp. 95–112 at p. 107.

emphasizing that on the question of the interpretation of Apollo and its implications K.O. Müller sided with Voss and with other rationalist scholars against Creuzer, I do not wish by any means to imply that K.O. Müller shared their rationalist outlook in general. Even as there were aspects in both approaches which he appreciated,⁴⁸ K.O. Müller was critical both of Creuzer and of what he perceived as his rationalist opponents' reduction of the subject to triviality.⁴⁹

There were two strands to K.O. Müller's argumentation against the interpretation of Apollo as a solar god, both of which suggest a prioritization of evidence from cult over myth. At a first level, K.O. Müller argued that there were no signs of what he regarded as hallmark traits of the worship of nature-deities in the worship of Apollo, namely, traces of a worship of powers of procreation. He further stressed that, in contrast to nature-deities, Apollo was not conceived as an offspring-producing god, but rather as an unmarried youth. In his view, the poets' stories about his progeny or his pursuit of Daphne had not to do with Apollo's conception in cult.⁵⁰ At a further level, K.O. Müller considered evidence

⁴⁸ E. Müller (1847), p. xlvii.

⁴⁹ On K.O. Müller's mixed views see his reviews of, and responses to, Creuzer's *Symbolik* and Voss' *Antisymbolik* in E. Müller II (1848), pp. 3–20, pp. 21–5 (*Symbolik*), and pp. 25–30 (*Antisymbolik*) and K.O. Müller (1825), pp. 40–1, 321–6 and 331–6. See further the discussion in F. Graf, 'Karl Otfried Müller: *Eleusinen* (1840)', in Calder/Schlesier (1998), pp. 217–38 at pp. 223–4. As we shall see, K.O. Müller profoundly objected to rationalist approaches which reduced Greek religion to priestly schemings. In his letter to Elvers of 1830, he wrote: 'Ich hasse die Rationalisten, weil sie mir die heterogensten Dinge zu vermischen scheinen, die religiösen Vorstellungen, welche ihre Bürgschaft und Sicherheit bloß darin haben, daß sie Bedürfnisse unsres Herzens befriedigen und Vertrauen und Zuversicht und Seligkeit geben und das alles praktischen Interesses entkleidete vernünftige Denken, welchem nach meiner festen Überzeugung im persönlichen Gott, Unsterblichkeit und was sonst den Hauptinhalt der Religionen ausmacht, völlig fremd und unerreichbar sind.' He went on to say that rationalism was 'das rechte Bild unsrer confusen, matten und weichlichen Zeit' K.O. Müller to Elvers, 7 July 1830, n. 58, in Kern (1936), pp. 123–4. Cf. Bravo (1968), p. 123. For Momigliano, for all the differences between Voss and K.O. Müller, there remained 'genug Übereinstimmungen, um Voß zu einem Vorgänger von Müller zu machen': Momigliano (2000), p. 107, Blok (1998), p. 56. K.O. Müller is more usually seen as occupying an intermediary position in the history of the discipline between the romanticism of Creuzer and the rationalism of Voss and Lobeck: Dilthey (1898), p. 27, Feldman/Richardson (1972), p. 417, Blok (1998), p. 94. Note the title of the 1998 volume edited by W.M. Calder III and R. Schlesier: *Zwischen Rationalismus und Romantik* [my emphasis]: *Karl Otfried Müller und die antike Kultur*.

⁵⁰ K.O. Müller II (1824), p. 290.

from cult that could be taken to suggest that Apollo was a solar deity. He conceded that there appeared to be solar associations in Apolline festivals like the Thargelia and the Pyanepsia. However, he advanced the view that they did not indicate any substantial affinity between Apollo and the sun. In his opinion, Apollo's association with agriculture was to be understood in the light of his broader role as an apotropaic god rather than in solar terms.⁵¹ Moreover, he argued that the dates of the main festivals of Apollo did not suggest a link with the course of the sun, but rather with the phases of the moon. The worship of Apollo and the worship of Helios as attested in places such as Corinth, Attica and Rhodes, he maintained, were fundamentally unrelated.⁵² His conclusion was that Apollo began to be identified with the sun only when philosophers began to interpret the gods of traditional religion in elemental terms.⁵³

K.O. Müller's position that Apollo was not by origin a solar deity is the most conspicuous example of his broader opposition to the physical interpretation of the Olympian gods. This opposition tends to appear under two forms in his writings. In some parts, he implied that the Olympians did not have physical origins, but that their worship had originated in a 'general feeling of the Divine'.⁵⁴ In other parts, as for example, in his later *Handbuch der Archäologie der Kunst* (1830) he suggested that the Olympian gods had, in fact, originally been *Naturgötter* as well, but gradually developed in an ethical direction.⁵⁵ He there even referred to Apollo as a *Naturgott*. He still emphasized, however, that his cult and faith acquired sooner than any other god's an *ethischpolitische Tendenz* owing to the character of the people who especially cultivated his worship.⁵⁶

K.O. Müller's rejection of physical interpretations should be seen in the light of his broader conception of religion. In his view, religion was rooted in the human heart rather than in reflection on the phenomena

⁵¹ K.O. Müller II (1824), p. 286. Nilsson accounted for Apollo's association with agriculture in the same manner: 'Ein agrarischer Gott im eigentlichen Sinn war Apollon nicht... Wie wir deutlich sehen können, hat er sich als übelabwehrender Gott agrarischer Bräuche angenommen.' Nilsson (1941), p. 504.

⁵² K.O. Müller II (1824), pp. 287–8.

⁵³ K.O. Müller II (1824), p. 288.

⁵⁴ E.g. K.O. Müller (1825), p. 243.

⁵⁵ K.O. Müller, *Handbuch der Archäologie der Kunst* (Breslau: Max, 1830), pp. 441, 462. Cf. K.O. Müller I (1824), p. 14.

⁵⁶ K.O. Müller (1830), pp. 461–2. J. Caesar, *Ein Beitrag zur Charakteristik K.O. Müllers als Mytholog* (Marburg: Elwerts, 1859), p. 13.

of the natural world.⁵⁷ In addition, the solar interpretation of Apollo and the physical interpretation of the Olympian gods more broadly were incompatible with K.O. Müller's idealized view of the Greeks. An idealizing tendency is pervasive in his work, most notably in his account of the Dorians,⁵⁸ whom recalling Schlegel, K.O. Müller considered as the 'real Hellenes'.⁵⁹ In his writings he laid stress on their heroic and manly character.⁶⁰ Order, stability, harmony was said to characterize every aspect of Dorian culture from education to music to law.⁶¹ K.O. Müller wrote in the decades after the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars and it is arguable that his appreciation of the *unveränderliche Ordnung* prescribed by Dorian laws was affected by the recent memories of European-wide convulsions.⁶² In his 'Ueber den angeblich ägyptischen Ursprung der griechischen Kunst' K.O. Müller also glorified the Dorian warrior ethos and practices.⁶³ This portrayal of the Dorians has given rise to the suggestion that K.O. Müller saw

⁵⁷ K.O. Müller, Review of T.B. Eméric-David's *Jupiter* (1833) in E. Müller II (1848), pp. 82–9 at p. 86.

⁵⁸ On K.O. Müller's idealization of the Dorians see Wittenburg (1984), V. Loseman, 'Die Dorier im Deutschland der dreißiger und vierziger Jahre', in Calder/Schlesier (1998), pp. 313–48 at pp. 315–16, Williamson (2004), pp. 147–8. For views of the Dorians in the history of scholarship see Hall (1998), pp. 4–16. The fascination with Sparta in modern times is examined in E. Rawson, *The Spartan Tradition in European Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

⁵⁹ K.O. Müller, Review of Creuzer's *Symbolik*, E. Müller II (1848), p. 7.

⁶⁰ K.O. Müller II (1824), p. 284, 'Die Menschennatur selbst trägt wieder durch den ganzen Volksstamm das Gepräge des männlichen Geschlechts, wie schon daraus abzunehmen, daß das Empfangende und Bedürftige, das Anschließende und Sehn-süchtige, das Weiche und Unstete, wesentliche Züge des weiblichen Wesens, Gegensätze der Dorischen Natur sind, die den Charakter der Selbstständigkeit und gebändigten Kraft trägt.' K.O. Müller IV (1824), p. 406. Cf. Kocziszky (2011), pp. 520–1.

⁶¹ 'Der Dorische Sinn will überall eine reine und klare Harmonie' K.O. Müller IV (1824), p. 405. Cf. K.O. Müller (1820), p. 533.

⁶² K.O. Müller (1820), p. 533. As mentioned, K.O. Müller's portrayal of the Dorians in part recalls F. Schlegel's in *Von der Schulen der griechischen Poesie* (1794). Himself writing in the wake of the turmoil of the French Revolution, Schlegel maintained that 'Der Ton ihrer Sittlichkeit [of the Dorians] war Größe, Einfalt, Ruhe; friedlich und doch heldenmütig, lebten sie in einer edeln Freude'. In his view, the Dorians were 'der ältere, reinere, nationalste Griechische Stamm': Schlegel (1794), pp. 8, 10. Cf. Kocziszky (2011), pp. 516–17. As Kocziszky notes (*ibid.* p. 518), in his letters K.O. Müller referred to his reading of Friedrich Schlegel.

⁶³ 'Doch hat das Dorische Leben auch eine sehr schöne, eine erhebende Seite. Die Schlacht war ein Tanz, der Marsch Musik, und ein dem Eros von den Schönsten dargebrachtes Opfer leitete sie ein.' K.O. Müller (1820), p. 533. Cf. K.O. Müller's discussion of the Spartan way of war: K.O. Müller III (1824), pp. 231ff.

them as a kind of proto-Prussians.⁶⁴ Dilthey observed that K.O. Müller found in the Dorians, as he saw them, 'the real, pure Greekness which he had in his soul'.⁶⁵ Even in his own time K.O. Müller was criticized for putting forward an idealized picture of the Dorians, a criticism which he attempted to ward off the following year in his *Prolegomena*.⁶⁶ He acknowledged there the cultural superiority of Ionian Athens, though he took care to distance himself from its democracy: 'Never have I been so ridiculously foolish as to wish in the slightest to deny that, however strong the vigour and dignity of Doric life, the soil of Athens (albeit not governed by a constitutional monarchy) produced the finest flowering of the Hellenic spirit.'⁶⁷

Although K.O. Müller possessed a profound feeling for nature and his attitude towards nature in certain respects recalled that of contemporary romantic thinkers and writers,⁶⁸ he did not approach the ancient worship of nature-gods with the sympathy, which, as we saw, advocates of physical interpretations tended to display. As for Voss and Solger, for K.O. Müller as well, the worship of nature-gods was associated with Oriental religions and had connotations of morbid emotional excess and mysticism and orgiasm.⁶⁹ Based on the cycle of

⁶⁴ É. Will, *Doriens et Ioniens* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1956), pp. 11–12. Cf. A. Momigliano, 'A Return to Eighteenth-Century "Etruscheria": K.O. Müller' (1985), in G.W. Bowersock and T.J. Cornell (eds.), *A.D. Momigliano: Studies on Modern Scholarship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 302–14 at p. 307. Kocziszky (2011), p. 520.

⁶⁵ Dilthey (1898), p. 20, cf. 'Wem wäre das stolze Bild nicht bekannt und befreundet [my emphasis], welches Otfried Müller mit allem Rüstzeug gelehrter Forschung dem Volksstamm der Dorier zu Ehren entworfen hat? Die durchgängige Tüchtigkeit in Staat Haus und Sitte, die jenen Stamm so glänzend als dauernd auszeichnete, gewährt auch für sich allein eine der grössten geschichtlichen Erscheinungen des Alterthums, und wenn man für deren lebendige Kenntniss der Forschung Müllers sich allzeit dankbar erkennt, so darf man auch weniger zögern vom Ruhm eben jener Dorier einigen falschen Schmuck abzustreifen, den Müllers begeisterte Darstellung aus frühem Dämmerlicht mythischer Vorzeit für sie entnahm.' E. Gerhard, 'Über den Volksstamm der Achäer', *Abhandlungen der Königl. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (Berlin: Königl. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1854c), pp. 419–58 at p. 434.

⁶⁶ K.O. Müller (1825), pp. 49–50. 'Mir ist nie eingefallen, Alles was Dorier gethan, trefflich zu finden.' K.O. Müller (1825), p. 50.

⁶⁷ K.O. Müller (1825), p. 50.

⁶⁸ E. Müller (1847), pp. xxv–xxvi, xl.

⁶⁹ K.O. Müller, *Geschichte der Griechischen Literatur*, vol. I (Breslau: Max, 1841), pp. 21–2, where he, however, acknowledged a milder form of Nature-worship in Greece, and K.O. Müller II (1824), pp. 290, 386, 409. R. Schlesier, "'Dieser mystische Gott". Dionysos im Spiegel von Karl Otfried Müllers Religionstheorie', in Calder/Schlesier (1998), pp. 397–421 at p. 405, cf. Arvidsson (2006), p. 65.

nature, it gave expression to conflicting emotions of jubilation and mourning of cataclysmic intensity that produced a dampening effect on the mind.⁷⁰ A 'naïve Naturreligion' was typical of agricultural peoples like the Pelasgians or of the weak and effeminate 'Orientals'. However, it was unbecoming the manly and heroic Dorian Greeks, who, K.O. Müller emphasized, were not a tribe of tillers.⁷¹

In his first year at Göttingen K.O. Müller had had to take care not to be considered by the rationalist circles there as a promoter of superstition or mysticism because he was opposed to the dominant view at Göttingen that the religions of antiquity were to be understood in terms of priestly deception.⁷² As K.O. Müller stated in a letter to his parents, 'one has to take great pains not to be considered mystic as Göttingen's old professorial caste throws everything imaginable into a pot under the cover of mysticism: natural philosophy, romantic poetry, new theology, higher historical research, symbolical mythology and so forth; they then pour the contents of that pot into the

⁷⁰ K.O. Müller (1841), pp. 21–2.

⁷¹ K.O. Müller I (1824), p. 14. K.O. Müller, Review of Creuzer's *Symbolik*, E. Müller II (1848), p. 7. In K.O. Müller's view, agriculture tended to bind man too closely to nature and to benumb freedom of action: 'Dem Ref. scheint es, als wenn der Ackerbau den Menschen allzusehr an die Natur bände und, wie er durch die vorgeschriebene jährlich wiederkehrende Thätigkeit die Freiheit des Handelns lähmt, so auch das religiöse Glauben von Höhern abziehend zu sehr auf die unmittelbaren segnen verbreitenden Naturkörper und Naturkräfte hinwedete': *ibid.* He stressed that 'Wenn die Dorier ein thatkräftiger, heroisch gesinnter Hellenenstamm waren, so mußte wohl die ihnen eigenthümliche religiöse Empfindung eine ähnliche Farbe tragen. Wie ihr Leben stets eine gewisse Abneigung vor Ackerbau und harmloser Naturbeschäftigung überhaupt, und dagegen ein Hinneigen zur Darstellung eigener Kraft zeigt, so wird auch ihr Gott im Gegensatze stehn gegen die Naturgottheiten ackerbauender Stämme, in denen die innige Beziehung des menschlichen Lebens zum segenspreißenden Acker auf eine tiefe und ergreifende Weise gefaßt ist.' K.O. Müller II (1824), pp. 284, 290. Cf. Kociszky (2011), pp. 521–2, Williamson (2004), p. 197, Birch (1989), pp. 115–16. On K.O. Müller's view of Phrygians and Lydians as effeminate and his association of orgasm with female worshippers see Schlesier (1998), p. 408. The notion that agriculture fostered inactivity and its connection to the worship of nature are also themes in Bachofen: 'Ackerbau bringt eine Vertrautheit mit der Natur, die zuletzt alle Gedanken des Menschen nach ihrem Vorbilde gestaltet ... zugleich damit wächst Freude an Gesittung und Friede, mehrt sich auch der Besitz und die Liebe zur Bequemlichkeit. Gar leicht entsteht innere Entzweiung und zugleich ist der Arm der Waffen entwöhnt ... Überall führt der Naturdienst auf die Mysterien' Schmidt (1927), pp. 140–1. As Momigliano notes, for Bachofen '*Mutterrecht* means agriculture. In agriculture the field is more important than the seed: the wife than the husband'. A. Momigliano, 'Johann Jakob Bachofen: From Roman History to Matriarchy', in Momigliano (1987), pp. 91–107 at p. 105.

⁷² E. Müller (1847), p. xlvii, Dilthey (1898), pp. 27–8.

gutter.⁷³ As we have seen in the case of Voss, rationalist scholars tended to level the term 'mystic' as a reproach against scholars whose views of Greek religion and of Greek culture in general did not conform to their own. Bravo cites the correspondence of Böckh which is illuminating in this respect. Thus in a letter to Welcker of 1825 Böckh stated that '[scholars led by G. Hermann] smell mysticism everywhere and want to counter it with enlightenment'.⁷⁴ For K.O. Müller, mysticism was based on the notion of the incomprehensibility of God and was associated with a lack of formal clarity.⁷⁵ In his eyes, conceiving the divine on the analogy of the natural, as opposed to the human, world highlighted the unbridgeable gap between gods and mortals. For this reason, he held, mysticism tended to prevail in the cults of nature-deities.⁷⁶ Arguably as a response to the allegations of mysticism threatening him at Göttingen and to highlight his distance from the approach of symbolist scholars K.O. Müller placed great emphasis on dissociating Dorian religion in general and the worship of Apollo in particular from the mysticism of nature-cults.⁷⁷ He thus maintained that those feelings through which man merged with nature were 'originally alien to the Dorian religion'.⁷⁸ As we saw in a letter to Schorn of 1821 K.O. Müller had stated that he discerned in Apollo a 'far greater idea' than Creuzer's comparison of Apollo with Bel would allow. In his review of Creuzer's *Symbolik* in the same year, K.O. Müller wrote: 'it is most regrettable to note that all manner of things have, despite so many promising

⁷³ K.O. Müller to his parents, Göttingen, 3 November 1819, n. 39, in O. Kern and E. Kern, *Carl Otfried Müller. Lebensbild in Briefen an seine Eltern mit dem Tagebuch seiner italienisch-griechischen Reise* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1908), pp. 54–5. E. Müller (1847), p. xlv.

⁷⁴ Bravo (1968), p. 85. Cf. 'Hermann gibt hier und da versteckt auch mir Mystizismus schuld, nämlich in der Metrik!' Bravo (1968), pp. 85–86. On the quarrel between Hermann and Böckh see E. Vogt, 'Der Methodenstreit zwischen Hermann und Böckh und seine Bedeutung für die Geschichte der Philologie', in Flashar (1979), pp. 103–21.

⁷⁵ '... gerade darauf beruht das Mystische, daß das religiöse Gemüth, dunkeln Ahnungen des Unbegreiflichen sich hingebend, darauf verzichtet sie zu bestimmten, klaren Gestalten herauszuarbeiten' K.O. Müller 'Eleusinien', (1840b), in E. Müller II (1848), pp. 242–311 at p. 290, Graf (1998), pp. 232–3.

⁷⁶ '[alles Mystische] im religiösen Gefühl aus der Erkenntniß der absoluten Differenz des Göttlichen hervorgeht, und daher in Naturculten vorwiegt.' K.O. Müller II (1824), p. 409.

⁷⁷ 'alles Mystische [wird] in den Hintergrund gedrängt.' K.O. Müller II (1824), p. 409.

⁷⁸ K.O. Müller IV (1824), p. 406.

indications of what is true and right, been quite haphazardly thrown together for love of the Orient, and that the fundamental spiritual opposition [*der ganz entgegengesetzte Geist*] between the Greek Apollo and the Phoenician Baal should have been so misinterpreted.⁷⁹ According to K.O. Müller, savage orgiastic and self-destructive rage prevailed in nature-cults such as Syria's. Apollo had nothing to do with Baal and his despicable religion [*diese abscheuliche Baalsreligion*] as Creuzer would have it.⁸⁰ In *die Dorier* K.O. Müller reiterated that Apollo 'had little relation to the life of nature and nothing mystical in his being'.⁸¹ Orgiasm was entirely alien to his worship which stood for harmony and order. If orgiasm was prominent in the worship of Baal, it was also the hallmark of the worship of Dionysos. In contrast to the Dorian non-elemental Apollo, K.O. Müller regarded Dionysos as a nature-god who had come to Greece from Thrace. K.O. Müller laid great stress on the antithesis between the Apolline and the Dionysiac worships,⁸² which again may be seen as a reaction to their portrayal in the writings of symbolist scholars as

⁷⁹ K. O. Müller, Review of Creuzer's *Symbolik*, E. Müller II (1848), p. 16.

⁸⁰ K. O. Müller (1848), p. 14.

⁸¹ K.O. Müller II (1824), p. 356, Schlesier (1998), p. 401. According to K.O. Müller, to the extent that mystical elements appeared in Greek religion, they tended to be found in the worship of Chthonian deities. In contrast to the Olympians, these had, in his view, (retained) close ties to the natural world: K.O. Müller (1840b), pp. 289–90. K.O. Müller attributed their worship to the Pelasgian inhabitants of Greece and, revealingly, suggested that the Aeolians, the Achaians, the Dorians and the Ionians must have nurtured 'a certain antipathy' towards Chthonian religion: K.O. Müller (1840b), p. 291. On the contrast between the Olympian and the Chthonian gods in K.O. Müller's work and his association of the Chthonians with mysticism see Schlesier (1994), pp. 22–3, Schlesier (1998), p. 405 and Graf (1998), pp. 220ff. and pp. 229ff. On the role that the contrast of Olympian and Chthonian gods has played in the history of scholarship see Schlesier (1994), pp. 21–32, who suggests that the notion of 'Chthonian religion' should be abandoned. On the Olympian/Chthonian distinction see further the studies of S. Scullion, 'Olympian and Chthonian', *Classical Antiquity* 13, 1994, pp. 76–119, 'Heroic and Chthonian Sacrifice: New Evidence from Selinous', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 132, 2000, pp. 163–71, 'Sacrificial Norms, Greek and Semitic: Holocausts and Hides in a Sacred Law of Aixone', in P. Brulé (ed.), *La Norme en Matière Religieuse en Grèce Ancienne* (Liège: Centre international d'étude de la religion grecque antique, 2009), pp. 153–69, and the discussions in Parker (2011), pp. 80–4, Burkert (2011), pp. 305–10, Versnel (2011), pp. 144–5, n. 432.

⁸² 'Noch weiter bleibt von ihm [Apollo] der glühende und sich selbst verzehrende Orgiasmus, in welchem *choleriche Völker* [my emphasis] von einer Naturansicht bewegt, die den Naturgott bald leidend und zerfleischt, bald siegend und strahlend erblickte, in taumelnder Lust und ausgelassenem Toben den Jubel auszusprechen und die Wehmuth zu ersticken strebten: welche Gestalt religiöser Empfindung für

sharing a common origin in Asian fire- and sun-worship. A Hellenic, spiritual (and Protestant) Apollo emerges in his work as a counter to the 'romantic Catholic' mystical and solar Apollo-Bel of the symbolists and his kindred Dionysos. Although, as we saw, the notion of a sharp polarization between Apollo and Dionysos was undermined by certain later scholars like Preller, it remained influential throughout the nineteenth century.

As we mentioned, according to K.O. Müller, in contrast to the formal confusion and the orgiastic elements prevalent in the worship of nature-deities, one could see expressed in the worship of Apollo 'love for brightness and clarity and aversion to the undefined and boundless'.⁸³ One of its principal purposes was 'to preserve the calm balance of the mind and remove everything that poisons it, incites delirium and obscures inner clarity. The Dorian mind desires everywhere a pure and clear harmony'.⁸⁴ In K.O. Müller's eyes, tranquillity and harmony constituted the core Apolline qualities and provided the unifying link between the various functions of the god. Thus he suggested that the music of the cithara was associated with Apollo as 'it appeared to be the most appropriate way for expressing calm and simple harmony; for the worship of Apollo seeks everywhere to produce a solemn calm and tranquility of the soul'.⁸⁵ Through the laws that Apollo prescribed as the prophet of Zeus, 'everywhere calm, clarity and harmony' were established.⁸⁶

K.O. Müller's portrayal of Apollo in *Die Dorier* with its stress on such qualities as tranquility, harmony and order and its aversion to mysticism and orgiasm may be seen as a document of a current in contemporary German Protestant piety that valued emotional restraint and was hostile towards mysticism⁸⁷ in contrast to the perceived vindication of mysticism and orgiasm in the writings of the 'romantic

Griechenland die Thrakische Verehrung des Dionysos darstellt.' K.O. Müller II (1824), p. 290. On K.O. Müller's view of Dionysos see Schlesier (1998).

⁸³ K.O. Müller IV (1824), p. 399.

⁸⁴ K.O. Müller IV (1824), p. 405. Cf. Loseman (1998), p. 316.

⁸⁵ K.O. Müller II (1824), p. 343.

⁸⁶ K.O. Müller II (1824), p. 341.

⁸⁷ One may draw a parallel between K.O. Müller's stance in *Die Dorier* and the criticism of mysticism by one of the leading figures of German Protestant theology in the period, the rationalist H. Paulus (1761–1851), a colleague and defender of Voss at Heidelberg: H. Hermelink, *Das Christentum in der Menschheitsgeschichte von der französischen Revolution bis zur Gegenwart*, vol. I (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1951), p. 341. At the same time we should note the presence of mystical tendencies in other currents in contemporary Protestantism such as Pietism.

Catholic' symbolist scholars. The emphatic distinction between the morbid, effeminate mysticism and orgasm of the worship of foreign nature-gods and the ordered worship of the ethical Apollo of the virile Dorians is also representative of a stereotypical aspect of contemporary Orientalizing discourse, which, however, was far from being universally accepted in scholarship on Greek religion as the prominence of physical interpretations of the Greek gods shows.

K.O. Müller's theory of the Dorian origins of Apollo was rejected even by students of his like Preller, Schönborn or Curtius who argued that Apollo derived from Asia Minor.⁸⁸ Moreover, the view that Apollo had by origin been a sun-god and more broadly that the Greek gods had been by origin nature-gods, remained, as we saw, prominent to the end of the nineteenth century, despite the opposition of K.O. Müller as well as of Voss, Hermann and Lobeck. To this extent the rationalists and K.O. Müller suffered a defeat. We may note that at the level of methodology the part of K.O. Müller's argumentation that was aimed at showing that there were no signs of a worship of powers of procreation in the worship of Apollo, if possibly effective against Creuzer, would not be effective in the case of scholars like Preller or Roscher, whose arguments in support of the solar significance of Apollo and of the physical significance of the Greek gods in general did not necessarily depend on the association with powers of procreation. If, however, K.O. Müller's theory of the Dorian origins of Apollo and his rejection of the solar interpretation failed to command wide support, the vocabulary of tranquillity, brightness, simplicity and harmony that recurs in his account of Apolline worship reproduced the Winckelmannian conception of Greek culture and had a powerful impact both on, and beyond classical scholarship.⁸⁹ It decisively contributed to the

⁸⁸ The opposition to K.O. Müller's theory of a Dorian Apollo is mentioned in H.D. Müller (1857), pp. 256–7, n.1 and H.D. Müller, *Ueber den dorischen Ursprung des Apollodienstes* (Göttingen: Universitäts Buchdruckerei, 1859), pp. 2ff. In France, Maury agreed with K.O. Müller in viewing Apollo as the god of the Dorians par excellence, but at the same time regarded him as a solar god: Maury (1857), pp. 145, 148. On the broader reception of K.O. Müller's work in France see P. Judet de la Combe, 'Le Savant Antiquaire de Goettingue'. Karl Otfried Müller en France', in Calder/Schlesier (1998), pp. 283–311, È. Gran-Aymerich, 'Karl Otfried Müller et la France', *Revue Germanique Internationale* 14, 2011, pp. 113–23. In modern scholarship among those unconvinced by K.O. Müller's argumentation is Bernal who reiterates the case for the Egyptian and solar origins of Apollo: M. Bernal, *Black Athena* III (N.J.: RUP, 2006), pp. 454–77.

⁸⁹ It has long been recognized that K.O. Müller's *Die Dorier* was a source of influence on Nietzsche's portrayal of Apollo in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*: C. Andler, *Nietzsche, Sa Vie et Sa Pensée*, vol. 2 (Paris: Bossard, 1921), pp. 244–53. Cf.

supersession of the earlier fascination with the mystical and 'Oriental' figure of Osiris-Bacchus⁹⁰ and to its replacement, for a great part of the nineteenth century, by the celebration of Apollo as an embodiment of the ethos of Greek culture. As we shall see, the view that Apollo was (or became) the 'most truly Greek of all divinities'⁹¹ remains influential to the present day.

II. JAHRESGÖTTER AND UNIVERSAL GODS: HEINRICH DIETRICH MÜLLER (1819–93)

The writings of K.O. Müller provided an impetus for studies of the myths and worships of the Greek tribes.⁹² The historical-critical approach was continued and expanded above all by K.O. Müller's less famous namesake, Heinrich Dietrich Müller. H.D. Müller was born in 1819 in Springe am Deister. In 1840, he enrolled at the University of Göttingen to study philology. Although H.D. Müller did not have the chance to study with K.O. Müller, the latter's work served as a source of inspiration for his own.⁹³ H.D. Müller worked as

Williamson (2004), pp. 240–1. Nietzsche followed K.O. Müller in associating Apollo with the Dorians and in stressing Apolline tranquillity: F. Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (Leipzig: Fritzsche, 1872), pp. 3, 18. However, in contrast to K.O. Müller, Nietzsche espoused the (conventional) view of Apollo as a sun-god: 'Er, der seiner Wurzel nach der »Scheinende«, die Lichtgottheit ist ... Sein Auge muss »sonnenhaft«, gemäss seinem Ursprunge, sein.' Nietzsche (1872), p. 3. Williamson (2004), p. 197, also examines the influence of K.O. Müller's portrayal of Apollo on Wagner's view of the god. On its influence on Ruskin see Birch (1988), pp. 118–19.

⁹⁰ On the alternating interest between Apollo and Dionysos see Aurnhammer/Pittrof (2002).

⁹¹ L. Dyers, *Studies of the Gods in Greece at Certain Sanctuaries Recently Excavated* (London/New York: Macmillan, 1891), p. 8.

⁹² One example is E. Gerhard's 'Über Griechenlands Volksstämme und Stammgottheiten', *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (Berlin: Königl. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1854b), pp. 459–97. On Gerhard see D. Rössler, 'Gerhard, Eduard', in Kuhlmann/Schneider (2014), pp. 226–7, Borgeaud (1999), pp. 56–9. For further scholars influenced by K.O. Müller see Gruppe (1921), pp. 163–71.

⁹³ In the foreword to his *Mythologie der Griechischen Stämme*, H.D. Müller stated that 'obwohl ich in vielen Stücken von den Ansichten dieses berühmten Mythologen [K.O. Müller] abweiche, so sind doch seine Schriften nicht nur der erste Ausgangspunkt meiner eigenen Forschungen gewesen, sondern sie haben mir auch unter allen die meisten Anknüpfungspunkte geboten'. H.D. Müller (1857), p. v.

teacher and later as professor at the Gymnasium at Göttingen until his retirement in 1882.⁹⁴ In his writings he put forward the theory that the gods of the Greek tribes had been *Jahresgötter* and, in effect, universal gods.

From *Ares* (1848) to *Mythologie der Griechischen Stämme* (1857–69) to *Historisch-mythologische Untersuchungen* (1892), H.D. Müller championed the principles of the historical-critical approach against physical interpretations of the Greek gods. He criticized scholars in the physical tradition like Welcker and Preller for overlooking the religious implications of the geographical and tribal divisions of the Greeks.⁹⁵ He further launched a frontal attack on the underlying assumption of physical interpretations: in the words of Welcker, on ‘the easily recognizable correspondence between polytheism and nature as a hypothetical explanation of the gods’.⁹⁶ In H.D. Müller’s view, this hypothesis could only account for gods whose essence was ‘demonstrably’ elemental such as Helios, Selene or Poseidon. Not, however, for the majority of the major Greek gods, who were complex ethical deities.⁹⁷ In the second part of his *Mythologie* H.D. Müller expanded his criticism of physical interpretations with a sustained attack on the increasingly influential Indo-European Comparative Mythology.⁹⁸ He did not contest the theory that the Indo-European peoples shared a basic religious inheritance that went back to the time of an Aryan *Urreligion*. However, following K.O. Müller and ultimately Herder, he took the view that the concrete forms the gods assumed in the religions of the Greeks or the Indians were to be seen as ‘autonomous formations of the special spirit of the people’.⁹⁹ In a further example of the unease of classical scholars with Indo-European Comparative Mythology H.D. Müller stated that its claim to provide the key to Greek mythology ‘must appear as an unjustifiable encroachment to all those who, like me, expect success only by a careful and deep penetration . . . into the entire spiritual life

⁹⁴ F. Sander, ‘Müller, Heinrich Dietrich’, *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 52 (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1906), pp. 506–11.

⁹⁵ H.D. Müller, *Mythologie der Griechischen Stämme*, second part, first section (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1861), pp. 58–9.

⁹⁶ Welcker (1858), p. 629. H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 53ff.

⁹⁷ H.D. Müller (1861), p. 56.

⁹⁸ H.D. Müller, *Mythologie der Griechischen Stämme*, second part, second section (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1869), pp. 219ff.

⁹⁹ H.D. Müller (1869), pp. 227–8, 241.

and the historical conditions of the single people'.¹⁰⁰ Even the etymological equation of the names of Dyaus and Zeus, the most important discovery of Indo-European Comparative Mythology, he regarded of limited value. Challenging the fundamental tenet of Indo-European Comparative Mythology that the analysis of divine names revealed the essence of the gods, he maintained that besides the name and the association with the sky it denoted, there was little in common between the minor Vedic deity Dyaus and Zeus.¹⁰¹

As was the case with K.O. Müller, H.D. Müller's opposition to the physical interpretation of the Greek gods went deeper than objections over methodology. Physical interpretations conflicted with his view on the origins of religion. In his case too, Schleiermacher's influence may be discerned. H.D. Müller regarded the feelings of powerlessness and dependence as characterizing human attitudes towards the divine. In his eyes, the elements and phenomena of nature could not have given rise to these feelings. For H.D. Müller, the idea of God did not derive from sensual impressions from the external world, nor from revelation, but rather originated, like language, in an innate human impulse.¹⁰² Accordingly, he emphasized that 'no matter which physical object they [the Greek gods] may rest upon, or which physical notions their nature may also appear to be mixed with, the specifically divine in them has another root; it germinates from the spirit of their worshippers . . . the Greek gods, insofar they rightly bear this name, are above all spiritual beings; if they were not, Greek religion would be no religion'.¹⁰³ 'The rain-, storm-, cloud- and lightning-gods and so forth of modern Mythology' were, therefore, to be discarded as 'aberrations of a pseudo-science that had not attained to sufficient clarity about the nature of religion'.¹⁰⁴

As we saw, advocates of physical interpretations like Forchhammer or Preller laid stress on the point that they did not regard the Greek

¹⁰⁰ H.D. Müller (1869), p. 227.

¹⁰¹ H.D. Müller (1869), pp. 239–40. One may compare Lehrs' objection to the 'Sanskritists' that the equation Dyaus-Zeus did not throw any real light on the understanding of Zeus: Lehrs (1875), pp. 272–3, and, in the following generation, Wilamowitz's point that 'der himmels- und gewittergott Zeus fehlt den Indern und Germanen; die träger seines namens haben bei ihnen andere functionen, und seine functionen werden von andern göttern geübt'. Wilamowitz (1895a), p. xi.

¹⁰² H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 62–3.

¹⁰³ H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 64–5.

¹⁰⁴ H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 190–1. Cf. H.D. Müller (1857), p. 280, where he argued that the gods and heroes of the Greeks were not 'dürftige Personificationen von Naturkräfte und Naturobjecten'.

gods as identifiable with the elements of the natural world. Nevertheless, H.D. Müller's attack on this front indicates the profundity of the theological unease that physical interpretations caused. The only rival scholar of whom H.D. Müller moderated his criticism was Welcker. H.D. Müller conceded that Welcker had displayed some awareness of the errors of physical interpretations in that he had portrayed Zeus as qualitatively different from, and above, the other Greek nature-gods, thereby preserving Greek religion's truly religious character. Nevertheless, he dismissed Welcker's Zeus Kronion as 'a stillborn child', as a 'totally untenable hypothesis' which was based on nothing more than a false etymology.¹⁰⁵ The following exchange between Preller and H.D. Müller sheds further light on the difference in the understanding of religion between the advocates of the two approaches. In his review of the first volume of H.D. Müller's *Mythologie der Griechischen Stämme* in 1859, Preller stated that although he acknowledged the importance of the differences between the various local and tribal cults, he could understand: 'neither how one can derive a so complicated fact like Greek mythology undoubtedly is only from these conditions nor how one can attribute a fact of the spiritual and inner life of nation, like its religion undoubtedly is, to such purely external and mechanical conditions, how one can explain the entire Greek faith in the gods only as a conglomerate of different tribal gods.'¹⁰⁶ On his part, H.D. Müller retorted 'I do not understand how one can be so bereft of all historical comprehension, that one can overlook or virtually deny every deeper impact of historical relations on the formation of the Greek faith in the gods and even less how one can explain the religion of the most ingenious people in the world in the least ingenious way as nothing else but a mechanical reflex of nature.'¹⁰⁷ As for K.O. Müller before him and for E. Curtius after him, for H.D. Müller, physical interpretations reduced Greek religion to a 'mechanical' worship of nature that deprived it of genuine religious content and offended his idealized view of the Greeks. It is notable that in the passage quoted above Preller as well accused H.D. Müller of offering a 'mechanical' account of Greek religion. The use of the

¹⁰⁵ H.D. Müller (1861), p. 65.

¹⁰⁶ L. Preller, Review of *Mythologie der Griechischen Stämme* of Heinrich Dietrich Müller, *Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Paedagogik* 79, 1859, pp. 172–86 at p. 180. Cf. Borgeaud (1999), p. 60.

¹⁰⁷ H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 59–60, n. 2.

term 'mechanical' as a term of criticism by both scholars may be seen as a reaction against the propagation of materialistic worldviews in the period.

Where H.D. Müller was on common ground with scholars in the tradition of physical interpretation was in regarding the discovery of the 'original nature of the individual gods' to be amongst the most important questions confronting the student of Greek religion.¹⁰⁸ However, in his eyes, they had entirely failed to address it in a satisfactory manner. Espousing K.O. Müller's fundamental hypothesis, H.D. Müller took the view that Greek polytheism was the historical product of the unification of the originally separate worships of Greek tribal gods.¹⁰⁹ In what strikes the modern reader as the very opposite of structuralist approaches, he argued that, as a consequence, if the study of the original nature of the Greek gods were to be set on a proper basis, scholars had 'to try to ignore, indeed to annihilate the polytheistic system of the gods' [*das polytheistische Göttersystem (zu) ignorieren, ja zu vernichten streben*]. If a deity appeared to be intelligible solely within the context of the 'polytheistic system', to be 'conditioned and limited by it', this was either because it was of a younger age than the rest of the gods or because it had undergone greater modification.¹¹⁰ The attraction that this approach held for H.D. Müller becomes clear in his praise of K.O. Müller's account of Apollo as a Dorian god which he revealingly referred to as 'this most beautiful result of K.O. Müller's researches'.¹¹¹ He suggested that by portraying Apollo as an originally Dorian god, K.O. Müller had provided a solution to the 'problem' of why Apollo should occupy only a secondary place within Greek polytheism although, in his view, he was the highest Greek god. In the context of Greek polytheism, H.D. Müller regretted, Apollo was not only one god among many, and indeed lower in rank to Zeus, Poseidon or Hades, but was also depicted as 'a bastard of Zeus'.¹¹² We may note the contrast with Welcker or Preller: in their eyes, the familial relations and groupings among the Greek gods were an admirable expression of unity in the divine world

¹⁰⁸ H.D. Müller, *Ares. Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der griechischen Religion* (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1848), p. v.

¹⁰⁹ H.D. Müller (1848), p. 130, H.D. Müller (1857), pp. 121–4.

¹¹⁰ H.D. Müller (1848), p. 130. ¹¹¹ H.D. Müller (1857), p. 256, n.1.

¹¹² H.D. Müller (1859), p. 2.

whereas, for H.D. Müller, they imposed unduly constraints on the powers of the individual gods and were offensive to moral values.

Despite his opposition to Indo-European Comparative Mythology, H.D. Müller had recourse to the premise of Indo-European kinship in describing the Greeks as they first reached Greece: 'the Hellenes were as they immigrated into Greece—that teaches us their language, their religion, tradition and . . . a look at the state of culture of the related Germanic people and also of the even more closely related Romans . . . a crude military people, little acquainted with the arts of peace, even averse to them, but full of physical and spiritual power, of proud, chivalrous disposition, endowed with deep moral impulses, an ideal outlook and a sharp mind.'¹¹³ One notes how religion becomes alongside language a source for an idealized portrayal of the Greeks which involved the attribution to them of qualities such as chivalry or an ideal outlook that evoked the German self-perception.

According to H.D. Müller, at the time of their arrival in Greece, the Greek tribes had brought with them developed religions which, he stressed, did not derive from foreign cultures. As in the case of K.O. Müller, it is worth looking at how H.D. Müller justified this claim: 'without wishing to deny that contacts with the Oriental peoples affected the inhabitants of Greece in many cases—if only one leaves aside the immigration myths [we see here K.O. Müller's influence]—*without raving at all over a pure and unmixed Greekness* [my emphasis], we nonetheless must protest against the assumption that a religion with such vital force, that pervaded all expressions of national life and was absolutely in conformity with it, like Hellenic religion, was ever imported from abroad in a similar way.'¹¹⁴ He added that progress in the study of ancient languages and especially Indo-European Comparative Linguistics proved that hypothesis wrong,¹¹⁵ a point which, as we have seen, was also made by K.O. Müller and Welcker.

Just as Apollo had originally been, according to K.O. Müller, a Dorian god, H.D. Müller held that Hades had originally been the *Stammesgott* of the Kaukonians, Zeus of the Achaeans and so forth.¹¹⁶ In his investigation into the original religions of the Greek tribes, H.D. Müller placed special emphasis on the Achaean Zeus. In

¹¹³ H.D. Müller, *Historisch-mythologische Untersuchungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1892), p. 35.

¹¹⁴ H.D. Müller (1857), pp. 116–17.

¹¹⁵ H.D. Müller (1857), p. 117.

¹¹⁶ H.D. Müller (1857), pp. 151, 188.

his opinion, the fact that the great heroic Achaeans families like the Aeacidae and the Pelopidae were thought to descend from Zeus and to have established cults of their divine ancestor indicated that Zeus had originally been the tribal god of the Achaeans. In stark contrast to Welcker's portrayal of Zeus Kronion, he suggested that Zeus' elevation into the position of the highest god of the Greek pantheon was a later development which was due to the historical circumstances in which the Achaean tribe found themselves.¹¹⁷ H.D. Müller acknowledged that the study of the original Achaean Zeus confronted the scholar of Greek religion with a methodological challenge as it involved a period many centuries before the earliest literary source, Homer. In his earlier *Ares*, H.D. Müller had argued that the conventional use of etymology as a primary tool for the discovery of the origins of the Greek gods was misguided.¹¹⁸ He further observed there that the tendency in contemporary scholarship was to regard cult to be more significant than myth as a source of evidence for the original nature of the gods.¹¹⁹ H.D. Müller maintained that, although many myths were only loosely connected to religion, old and genuine myths stood on a par with cultic activities. In his view, they had emerged and developed simultaneously and completed each other.¹²⁰ Practical considerations, however, tipped the balance, in his eyes, in favour of the use of evidence from myth for the inquiry into the origins of the gods. Thus H.D. Müller observed that reports about cultic practices tended to be incomplete and to derive from later times. He further argued that not all cultic practices had 'a symbolic relation with the particular character of the god, but rather many served . . . merely to give expression to general religious feelings; and even where they are symbolic, they are not rarely much harder to

¹¹⁷ H.D. Müller (1857), p. 188, H.D. Müller (1861), p. 73.

¹¹⁸ H.D. Müller (1848), pp. 2–3. ¹¹⁹ H.D. Müller (1848), p. 4.

¹²⁰ 'Ein solcher Mythos steht mit den Kultushandlungen auf gleicher Stufe, ist mit diesen zugleich entstanden und herangewachsen, beide bedingen und ergänzen sich gegenseitig': H.D. Müller (1848), p. 4. On the relation between myth and ritual in the history of scholarship see Burkert (1980) and W. Burkert, 'Mythos und Ritual im Wechselwind der Moderne', in H.F.J. Horstmanshoff, H.W. Singor, F. van Straten, and J.H.M. Strubbe (eds.), *Kykeon. Studies in Honour of H.S. Versnel* (Leiden/Boston/Cologne: Brill, 2002), pp. 1–22, Versnel (1990a), Schlesier (1994), pp. 307–28, Graf (1993), pp. 39–43, 50–3, Bremmer (2005). On shifts in the meaning of the term 'ritual' see J.N. Bremmer, "Religion", "Ritual", and the Opposition "Sacred vs. 'Profane': Notes towards a Terminological "Genealogy", in F. Graf (ed.), *Ansichten griechischer Rituale* (Stuttgart/Leipzig: Teubner, 1998), pp. 9–32.

understand than the myths, as naturally language is the most suitable means for the expression of spiritual concepts'.¹²¹ H.D. Müller's views on the relation between myth and cult and on the difficulties pertaining to the study of the latter arguably provide a more balanced assessment than in later nineteenth century scholarship which would concentrate with renewed emphasis on cult at the expense of myth.

To return to H.D. Müller's account of Zeus in his *Mythologie der Griechischen Stämme*, he attached particular importance to the analysis of the myth surrounding the cult of Zeus Lykaios in Arcadia.¹²² Earlier scholars like Welcker or Preller, and even K.O. Müller, had been in agreement in taking Zeus' epithet Lykaios to be cognate with the Latin lux and the Greek λευκός. In their eyes, it indicated that Zeus Lykaios was conceived as a god of light.¹²³ Rejecting arguments exclusively based on etymology, H.D. Müller focused instead on the mythic portrayal of the relationship between Zeus Lykaios, king Lykaon and his victim. In his view, Lykaon's name derived from Zeus epithet 'Lykaios' and indicated that he should be understood as a metamorphosis of the god. According to H.D. Müller, the wolf which Lykaon was transformed into, was a Chthonian symbol and Zeus Lykaios was to be viewed as a Chthonian god.¹²⁴ Contesting the usual association of Chthonian figures with fertility H.D. Müller argued that, on the contrary, they were associated with the destruction of animal and plant life in periods of drought—in the case of Greece, in the summer when the scorching heat of the sun destroyed vegetation.¹²⁵ The victim or enemy of the Chthonian Zeus Lykaios/Lykaon was none other than Zeus himself in his Olympian aspect, that is, as the god who provided the blessings of agricultural fertility until the beginning of the summer.¹²⁶ In the myth, therefore, a single divine personality was split into a murderous and a benevolent figure.¹²⁷ The myth provided evidence for the view that Zeus was

¹²¹ H.D. Müller (1848), p. 5. Cf. H.D. Müller (1861), p. 76.

¹²² H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 78ff. In his *Mythologie der Griechischen Stämme*, H.D. Müller developed the interpretation of Zeus Lykaios he had presented in his earlier treatise *Ueber den Zeus Lykaios* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1851). The interpretation of the cult of Zeus Lykaios remains contested. For an overview of different interpretations from the nineteenth century to the present see D.D. Hughes, *Human Sacrifice in Ancient Greece* (London/New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 102–3.

¹²³ H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 81–2.

¹²⁴ H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 90–4.

¹²⁵ H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 42–3, p. 93.

¹²⁶ H.D. Müller (1861), p. 94.

¹²⁷ H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 94–5, pp. 186–7.

conceived as a *Jahresgott*, a term used in earlier scholarship primarily in an astronomical sense, but which H.D. Müller employed to designate a deity who 'is thought to be active in the changing phenomena of the seasons, namely insofar as they condition the thriving or dying of vegetation, and to be cognate with them in such a manner, that the conflicting and mutually cancelling effects of them change the nature of the god itself and let it split because of the personalistic outlook in two opposing and mutually annihilating personalities'.¹²⁸

The concept of the *Jahresgott* which united a benevolent with a destructive, an Olympian with a Chthonian side, constituted a stronger version of the view that nature-gods had a beneficial and a dangerous side. It provided a more inclusive view of the Greek gods which transcended the stereotype of Olympian *Heiterkeit* and the sharp contrast between Olympian and Chthonian gods one encountered in the work of K.O. Müller. With the important exception of the sociological aspect, there are clearly similarities between H.D. Müller's *Jahresgott* and J.E. Harrison's *Eniautos-Daimon*. In discussing the antecedents of the *Eniautos-Daimon* in the introduction to *Themis*, Harrison mentioned the corn- and vegetation-spirits that appeared in the writings of Mannhardt and Frazer.¹²⁹ However, she was acquainted with the work of H.D. Müller and it is, thus, arguable that his *Jahresgott* was also an influence on the *Eniautos-Daimon*.

According to H.D. Müller, the 'fact' that the Achaean Zeus was conceived as a *Jahresgott* showed that, for all his association with the sky, no single physical element constituted his 'essence' as advocates of physical interpretations maintained. Instead, he encompassed every *Lebensäusserung* of nature.¹³⁰ In his view, the same held for the rest of the Greek *Stammesgötter*.¹³¹ This hypothesis brought H.D. Müller into difficulty as regards gods whose close links to

¹²⁸ H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 186–7. Cf. 'Vielleicht ist es aber besser, die hellenischen Gottheiten als Jahresgottheiten zu bezeichnen . . . Denn wiewohl auch die einzelnen Witterungsphänomene sowie der Wechsel von Tag und Nacht von ihrem Wirkungskreise nicht ausgeschlossen sind, so ist es doch vorzugsweise der Wechsel von Entstehen und Vergehen, von Tod und Leben in der Natur, wie ihn zunächst der Kreislauf der Jahreszeiten mit sich führt, an den sich der Gottesglaube anknüpft und den er recht eigentlich als Manifestation der Gottheit auffasst.' H.D. Müller (1892), p. 16.

¹²⁹ J.E. Harrison, *Themis. A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), p. xiii.

¹³⁰ H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 190, 212.

¹³¹ H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 190, 213–15.

specific elements of nature was hard to dispute such as Hephaistos or Poseidon. As a solution to the apparent problem, he suggested that these gods were the gods of the pre-existing Pelasgian population of Greece.¹³² We see that, as in the case of K.O. Müller, the worship of gods of natural elements was ruled out in the case of the 'real Hellenes' and was, instead, attributed to the Pelasgians. Indeed, in the writings of H.D. Müller the Pelasgians appear to have served as responsible for every aspect of Greek religion that did not conform to his views. As Humphreys observes, this tactic was frequently employed in the scholarship of the period to absolve the Greeks from aspects perceived to be disturbing or embarrassing.¹³³ In the following generation Farnell would argue against comparable ploys: 'The old shift of attributing to Oriental influences everything in Hellenic religion that clashed with our ideal of Hellenism was naïvely unscientific.'¹³⁴ To go back to H.D. Müller, in a passage indicating how contemporary gender stereotypes affected the interpretation of the Greek goddesses and their origins, he argued that the warrior maiden goddess Athena could have only been of non-Greek provenance as she did not conform to his conception of proper female roles: 'The manly Hellene worshipped above all a god, who was the ancestor of his lords and kings, a god who led him on in battle and granted him victory. If he also knew a goddess, he regarded her as the wife of his god, she was female in the full sense of the word, bride, wife and mother.'¹³⁵

H.D. Müller further argued that a Greek god tended to acquire 'in constant vivid interdependence with the consciousness both of the individual and of the community, a constantly growing plethora of the most miscellaneous ethical qualities which need have no common ground with the elemental side of his character or have a connection or relation with each other'.¹³⁶ Consequently, he strongly criticized the efforts of scholars in the physical tradition to derive all qualities of the Greek gods, be they physical or ethical, from a single *Grundbedeutung*.

¹³² H.D. Müller (1892), pp. 19ff.

¹³³ Humphreys (2004), p. 217. We should note, however, that there was also another strand in German scholarship, which drawing on Herodotos' account of the Pelasgian gods, portrayed Pelasgian religion as a pure, quasi-monotheistic religion, e.g. Gerhard (1854b), p. 461.

¹³⁴ L.R. Farnell, *Outline-History of Greek Religion* (London: Duckworth, 1921), p. 51.

¹³⁵ H.D. Müller (1892), pp. 25–6.

¹³⁶ H.D. Müller (1861), p. 69.

In his opinion, 'the unity of his [a Greek deity's] character is grounded only in the unity of the religious consciousness of the community, he originally belonged to.'¹³⁷ Thus in the case of the Achaean Zeus, H.D. Müller maintained that, in addition to being a *Jahresgott*, he became invested with a range of different ethical qualities and functions. He was, for example, an oracular and a military god, a protector of justice and so forth.¹³⁸ Alongside Zeus the Achaeans had worshipped Dione as his wife. For H.D. Müller, together Zeus and Dione had covered 'all essential human interests'. The Achaeans, therefore, had initially no need of other deities.¹³⁹ H.D. Müller argued that the figure of Dione had emerged as a split from Zeus. Thus, according to his portrayal, at the very origins of the Achaean religion stood Zeus as a single, universal God.¹⁴⁰ In his view, one was entitled to assume *mutatis mutandis* the same in the case of the other Greek tribes.¹⁴¹ H.D. Müller's account of the original worship of the Greek tribes hence amounted to a form of *Urmonotheismus*, although he underscored that it was a form of monotheism that fell short of the monotheism of revealed religion as it did not prevent the emergence of polytheism.¹⁴² Thus both the concept of the *Jahresgott* and of the universal *Stammesgott* were ultimately employed in support of an interpretation of Greek religion that exonerated the Greeks from being outright polytheists, but also affirmed the superiority of (Christian) monotheism. Taking aim at advocates of the theory that Greek religion had originally been a polytheistic *Naturreligion* like Preller, H.D. Müller argued that their mistake consisted in regarding religion as a product of human reason. In his eyes, it was a demand of reason that different gods were required to account for the different phenomena of nature. H.D. Müller took the view that religion should rather be seen as originating in the emotions of the human heart which had no need of a multiplicity of gods—it was satisfied with the notion of a single divine being ruling both in the

¹³⁷ H.D. Müller (1861), p. 69, n.1.

¹³⁸ H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 195–202.

¹³⁹ H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 209–10.

¹⁴⁰ H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 209–10. 'Sowohl in ethischer als in physischer Beziehung genügte die alte Zeusreligion . . . dem religiösen Bedürfnis völlig.' H.D. Müller (1861), p. 211.

¹⁴¹ H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 190, 213–16.

¹⁴² 'Es ist also in der That ein Monotheismus, von dem die Religion der Griechischen Stämme . . . ursprünglich ausgeht, ein Monotheismus freilich, der nicht mit dem Massstabe der geoffenbarten Religion gemessen werden darf.' H.D. Müller (1861), p. 213.

world of nature and in the inner world of man.¹⁴³ As we shall see, this view was reiterated with greater force by E. Curtius as the foundation-stone of his own version of *Urmonotheismus*.¹⁴⁴

III. UNITING THE ARYAN WITH THE SEMITIC: ERNST CURTIUS (1814–96)

One of the most eminent German historians and archaeologists of the second half of the nineteenth century, Ernst Curtius was one of the last great advocates of the historical-critical approach which he developed in the light of new archaeological discoveries. His writings on Greek religion have tended to be neglected, yet they are of interest, as Curtius advanced the most extreme version of the theory that the Olympian gods had originally been universal gods and as he emphasized the importance of studying Greek religion in the broader geographical and archaeological context of the Eastern Mediterranean and especially of the Semitic world.

¹⁴³ 'Die Quelle des Irrthums liegt darin, dass man vergisst, dass die Religion nicht durch den Verstand geschaffen, sondern aus dem Bedürfnis des Herzens erwachsen ist. Es ist eine Forderung des Verstandes, für jede einzelne wahrgenommene Erscheinung und Regung in der Natur irgend eine besondere wirkende Ursache... vorauszusetzen; die religiöse Empfindung des Herzens bedarf dessen nicht.' H.D. Müller (1861), pp. 212–13.

¹⁴⁴ Abroad, H.D. Müller's ideas found a receptive audience in Decharme in France. Decharme called H.D. Müller's *Mythologie*, which he rendered in French as 'Mythologie des races helléniques' an ingenious book. He disagreed with Müller with respect to Zeus, taking the view that he had been worshipped from the beginning by all Greek communities, but espoused the theory that 'le culte de la plupart des autres divinités paraît... s'être développé d'abord isolément au sein de chaque tribu' Decharme (1879), p. xxix. In Britain, in an article on the *Kekropidae* in which she focused on cult to propose that Herse was 'merely eponymous of the Hersephoria', Pandrosos an old earth-goddess and Aglauros a form of Erinys, Harrison stated: 'The whole story I feel is a clear instance of the action of two mythological laws long ago pointed out by H.D. Müller, but too often forgotten: (a) That in the *heroic* mythology of a city will be found much of the history of those who were originally its gods. (b) That in the fusion of tribes and tribal cults the cult that belongs to the weaker tribe keeps only its goddess; the god *quâ* god is effaced, or the connection between god and goddess obscured': J.E. Harrison, 'Mythological Studies', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 12, 1891, pp. 350–5 at p. 355.

Ernst Curtius was born in Lübeck in 1814, the third son of Syndikus C.G. Curtius.¹⁴⁵ He grew up in an environment of Protestant piety. Curtius described his father as 'the model of a Christian head of family' while Carl Curtius cited 'fear of god, love of the fatherland, poetic talent and enthusiasm for classical antiquity' as qualities which Ernst Curtius had inherited from his father.¹⁴⁶ Curtius remained deeply pious to the end of his life.¹⁴⁷ In 1833 he studied theology and philology at Bonn with Welcker with whom he would share a strongly Christianizing approach to Greek religion. The following year he moved to Göttingen where he studied with K.O. Müller. He completed his studies in 1836 at Berlin with Böckh. In the foreword to the second volume of his *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, written towards the close of his life in 1894, Curtius stated that his three eminent teachers had guided his intellectual development.¹⁴⁸ As will be seen, in the field of Greek religion and especially on the question of the emergence of Greek polytheism it was above all K.O. Müller who influenced Curtius.¹⁴⁹ Between 1837 and 1840 Curtius travelled to Greece alongside Forchhammer, K.O. Müller and Ritter.¹⁵⁰ As Gehrke notes, under the influence of A. von Humboldt and Ritter, Curtius too attached importance to the 'connection between people and their environment'.¹⁵¹ His first-hand acquaintance with the geography of Greece would powerfully affect his view of the formation of Greek religion, albeit in a markedly different way than in the case of Forchhammer. In 1844, Curtius was assigned the task of

¹⁴⁵ For the biographical information on Ernst Curtius I draw on F. Curtius, *Ernst Curtius. Ein Lebensbild in Briefen*, 2 vols. (Berlin: K. Curtius, 1913) and C. Curtius, *Zur Erinnerung an Ernst Curtius. Ein Vortrag* (Lübeck: Rahtgens, 1897).

¹⁴⁶ Curtius (1897), p. 3.

¹⁴⁷ In a letter written in 1895, one year before his death, Curtius stated that Christianity was 'der Maßstab für alle Werte' and that in Christ 'verklärt sich alles menschliche und findet in ihm sein Ziel und sein Verständnis': Curtius II (1913), p. 210.

¹⁴⁸ E. Curtius, 'Vorwort', *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, vol. II (Berlin: Hertz, 1894), pp. iii-x at p. iii.

¹⁴⁹ According to Kekulé, Curtius 'setzte da ein, wo O. Müller aufgehört'. R. Kekulé von Stradonitz, *Ernst Curtius. Gedächtnisrede* (Berlin: Spemann, 1896) p. 20, cf. Gehrke (2003), p. 19.

¹⁵⁰ Kekulé (1896), pp. 6-10, 19, Curtius I (1913), p. 145.

¹⁵¹ Gehrke (2003), p. 20, A.H. Borbein, 'Ernst Curtius', in M. Erbe (ed.), *Berlinische Lebensbilder. 4 Geisteswissenschaftler* (Berlin: Colloquium, 1989), pp. 157-74 at p. 165, Kekulé (1896), pp. 20-1. Ritter's influence is particularly visible in such writings of Curtius as 'Boden und Klima von Athen' (1877).

tutoring the future Kaiser Friedrich III and retained close ties to the Prussian court to the end of his life. In 1856, he became Professor of Philology and Archaeology at Göttingen.¹⁵² In 1868, he was appointed Professor of Classical Archaeology at Berlin while from 1875 to 1881 he supervised the German excavations at Olympia. He died in 1896 internationally recognized as one of the most distinguished scholars of his generation.

Curtius' writings on Greek religion spanned the second half of the nineteenth century. Amongst the most important are sections of his *Griechische Geschichte* (1857–67) as well as two essays, the titles of which reflect his emphasis on a historical perspective, 'Die Griechische Götterlehre vom geschichtlichen Standpunkt' (1875) and 'Studien zur Geschichte des Griechischen Olympos' (1890).

Like his predecessors in the tradition of the historical-critical approach, K.O. Müller and H.D. Müller, Curtius was highly critical of physical interpretations of the Greek gods.¹⁵³ He reiterated H.D. Müller's objection that such approaches displayed a crucial deficiency in that they did not take into consideration the historical development of Greek polytheism. Curtius underlined that just like other aspects of Greek culture such as the state or Greek art, the Greek gods had historically developed and should be only so understood—and not as 'a ready-made system'.¹⁵⁴ In this context, it should be stressed that Curtius singled out K.O. Müller's 'historical sense, with which he treated all objects of classical antiquity' as the greatest legacy his teacher had bequeathed to him.¹⁵⁵ Curtius was particularly critical of proponents of Indo-European Comparative Mythology for overestimating the significance of the Aryan origins of Greek religion at the expense of the influences it was subjected to after the Greeks settled in the Mediterranean.¹⁵⁶ Like H.D. Müller, Curtius watered down his criticism in the case of his other teacher, Welcker. Curtius

¹⁵² C. Curtius (1897), p. 18.

¹⁵³ E. Curtius, 'Studien zur Geschichte des Griechischen Olympos' (1890), in Curtius II (1894), pp. 22–39 at pp. 37–8. On Curtius' approach to the Greek gods see Konaris (2010), pp. 487–9.

¹⁵⁴ 'Das Götterwesen der Alten ist aber eben so gut wie ihr Staat und ihre Kunst ein geschichtlich Gewordenes und läßt sich nur als ein Werdendes begreifen.' Curtius (1875a), p. 50. On the broader trend to approach Greek religion in terms of its historical development in nineteenth-century scholarship see Henrichs (1987), pp. 22–3.

¹⁵⁵ Curtius II (1894), p. viii.

¹⁵⁶ Curtius (1875a), pp. 52–3.

conceded that Welcker had made an attempt to address the question of how the Greek gods had developed in the course of time by distinguishing older and newer stages in their conception. However, in Curtius' eyes he too ultimately failed to provide a satisfactory account of the historical formation of Greek polytheism. The title of Curtius' 1875 study '*Die Griechische Götterlehre vom geschichtlichen Standpunkt* [my emphasis]' signals his intention to improve on Welcker's *Götterlehre*.

As was the case with K.O. Müller and H.D. Müller, there were deeper grounds for Curtius' opposition to physical interpretations which again had to do with an idealized view of the Greeks and Curtius' conception of the nature of religion. In the tradition of Winckelmann, Curtius extolled the noble simplicity, the orderliness of Greek art.¹⁵⁷ In his eyes, the *Heiterkeit* of the Greek sky had fostered harmony and serenity in Greek life and culture as a whole.¹⁵⁸ Curtius' idealized view of the Greeks was monumentalized in his *Griechische Geschichte* which enjoyed outstanding popularity in Germany and abroad to the 1890s.¹⁵⁹ In addition, Curtius underscored that German culture was deeply indebted to classical Greece. As he stated in the revealingly entitled collection of lectures *Alterthum und Gegenwart*, 'the spirit of antiquity is a force of the present' which permeated German culture.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ E. Curtius, *Griechische Geschichte*, vol. II (Berlin: Weidmann, 1861), p. 279.

¹⁵⁸ E. Curtius, 'Das alte und neue Griechenland' (1862), *Alterthum und Gegenwart*, vol. I (1875b), pp. 22–40 at p. 35. On Curtius' idealization of Greece see K. Christ, 'Ernst Curtius und Jacob Burckhardt. Zur deutschen Rezeption der griechischen Geschichte im 19. Jahrhundert', in Christ/Momigliano (1988), pp. 221–48 at pp. 233, 238. A.H. Borbein, 'Ernst Curtius, Alexander Conze, Reinhard Kekulé: Probleme und Perspektiven der Klassischen Archäologie zwischen Romantik und Positivismus', in Christ/Momigliano (1988), pp. 275–302 at pp. 284–5. In his 'Die Kunst der Hellenen' (1853), Curtius drew a rather rare distinction between the Greek accomplishments in the sphere of the arts, one of the major sources for the broader idealization of the Greeks, and their conduct in public life: 'Sie [die Kunst] ist das verklarte Abbild, das bessere Selbst des Volks. Denn im geselligen und öffentlichen Leben da zeigen sich die Griechen—wer wollte das aus blinder Schwärmerei läugnen?—so unzuverlässig, eitel, leichtfertig und neuerungssüchtig; in ihrem Kuns- tleben dagegen wie ernst und beharrlich, wie klar und vernünftig, treu sich selbst und dem überlieferten Gesetze!' E. Curtius, 'Die Kunst der Hellenen' (1853), in Curtius (1875b), pp. 78–93 at p. 86. On Curtius' idealized view of Greek politics in other parts of his work see Christ (1988), pp. 234–5.

¹⁵⁹ On Curtius' *Griechische Geschichte* see K. Christ, *Griechische Geschichte und Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996), p. 124, Christ (1999), pp. 32–42, Marchand (1996), p. 109.

¹⁶⁰ E. Curtius, 'Das Mittleramt der Philologie' (1857b), in Curtius (1875b), pp. 1–21 at p. 9. Cf. Marchand (1996), p. 81.

In his eyes, the two greatest accomplishments in the history of German culture, the Reformation [we are reminded of Curtius' North German Protestant background] and the achievement of a German national literature were to be attributed to the fruitful marriage between the Greek and the German spirit.¹⁶¹ In the tradition of the great figures of German literature and thought Curtius claimed that an inner affinity existed between Germany and classical antiquity.¹⁶² The notion that nature-worship could have formed the essence of the religion of a people invested with such historical and cultural significance as the Greeks was unacceptable to Curtius. Recalling H.D. Müller's criticism of physical interpretations he objected that 'the true, universal core of all religion cannot be thus explained. No one has proved the representation of elemental forces on Olympus, no one has been able to explain how an intelligent people could come to the point of forming the idea of a deity whom they want to entrust themselves to in times of happiness and need, in life as in death from salt waves or earth's moisture or the wind.'¹⁶³ The references to phenomena like moisture and the wind suggest that Curtius' criticism was specifically directed against Forchhammer and Roscher.¹⁶⁴ Like H.D. Müller, Curtius regarded the idea of God as innate. In his eyes as well, the physical interpretation of the Greek gods implied that their conception had arisen from external physical stimuli, thereby depriving Greek religion of a 'real' religious content.¹⁶⁵

Curtius further followed K.O. Müller and H.D. Müller in taking the view that Greek polytheism had been the historical outcome of *Völkerverkehr*.¹⁶⁶ He regarded Greek polytheism as resulting specifically from the coming together of universal gods of different communities.¹⁶⁷ Curtius reiterated H.D. Müller's thesis that the Olympian gods had originally been universal gods with greater force: 'every Olympian is originally a complete god, a full god as the mind of man

¹⁶¹ Curtius (1857b), p. 9.

¹⁶² Kekulé (1896), p. 23.

¹⁶³ Curtius (1890), pp. 37–8.

¹⁶⁴ As we saw, Forchhammer assigned a prominent role to earth moisture in his interpretations while Roscher had written a monograph on *Hermes der Windgott* (1878).

¹⁶⁵ 'Ich stimme hier vollständig mit H.D. Müller überein, wenn er sagt: "Die physische Anschauung ist nicht der Grundstoff, aus dem die religiösen Vorstellungen sich bilden; die dem Menschen eingeborene Gottesidee entnimmt ihre Formen den Phaenomenen der Natur"' E. Curtius, 'Studien zur Geschichte der Artemis' (1887), in Curtius II (1894), pp. 1–21 at p. 15.

¹⁶⁶ Curtius (1890), p. 38.

¹⁶⁷ Curtius (1890), p. 38.

demands him, who in the feeling of the insufficiency of his powers finds himself in need of a transcendent being, who can help him in all circumstances, without having to remember which temple door he should knock on, to which one among the many he has to turn as the specialist in a specific area.¹⁶⁸ According to Curtius, publicly worshipped *Particulargottheiten* had been almost non-existent in Greece before Asklepios.¹⁶⁹ As in the case of H.D. Müller, Curtius' claim that a feeling of the inadequacy of human powers led to the conception of universal gods suggests the influence of Schleiermacher as it recalls his view of piety as based on a feeling of absolute dependence on God. Gods who even H.D. Müller had regarded as departmental such as Poseidon and Hephaistos, in Curtius' view, did not originally have their authority limited to a specific area. To take the case of Poseidon as an example, Curtius maintained that in Corinth he was considered to be responsible for everything that conduced to the prosperity of the city—from horse-raising to viticulture to artistic skills. He was therefore to be seen as a *zeusartiger Gott* who gradually became predominantly associated with the sea solely because his worship initially developed among coastal peoples.¹⁷⁰ Thus, like H.D. Müller, Curtius argued for a version of Greek *Urmonotheismus*.

Again like H.D. Müller, Curtius emphasized that there were drastic implications to be drawn for the study of the Greek gods from the insight that they had originally been universal gods: 'all efforts must be given up to establish special essences for the individual goddesses and areas of power, efforts which have never led to satisfying and valid results; because every deity is from the beginning a complete god. In essence, mythology will turn into morphology, and find its task in proving how the shared content of a comprehensive idea of god was

¹⁶⁸ Curtius (1890), p. 33. One may compare and contrast Bachofen's view 'Ja wie vielgestaltig, und mit wie manchen Beinamen tritt ein und derselbe Gott auf. Und doch hat in ihnen allen das Altertum, *gleich uns* [my emphasis], nur eine Gottheit angebetet. Siehe näher zu, und du wirst in jeder der polytheistischen Göttergestalten den Monotheismus finden. Im Grunde genommen liegt in jedem der Gebilde die ganze Fülle der Gottheit zur Einheit gestaltet vor uns. Wenn die argivischen Matronen in Zeus des Rettenden Tempel Adonis' Tod beweint hatten, und dann von da der Reihe nach Zeus den Nemeischen, Juno die Erhabene . . . weiter Neptun . . . Jeden in seinem Tempel besonders verehrten, so erschien ihnen diese Mehrzahl nicht als eine Teilung, sondern als eine Wiederholung der Einheit, als eine neue Inkorporation des gleichen Vaters.' Schmidt (1927), p. 139.

¹⁶⁹ Curtius (1890), p. 38.

¹⁷⁰ Curtius (1890), pp. 32–3.

grasped among the different tribes, recast and developed.¹⁷¹ Like H.D. Müller's, Curtius' criticism was primarily directed against the search for *Grundbedeutungen* by advocates of physical interpretations.¹⁷² In opposing physical interpretations, the advocates of the historical-critical approach were on common ground with the rationalist Lehrs. The latter, however, rejected just as much their theory that the Greek gods had been, as he put it, 'tribal or provincial gods brought together' as the theory that they had been 'physical elements'. In his essay on 'Gott, Götter und Dämonen', Lehrs emphasized that the major Greek gods were ideal figures and briefly discussed them in ethical terms.¹⁷³

To return to Curtius, in his study of nineteenth-century Aryan ideology Arvidsson cites Wikander's view that the middle of the nineteenth-century saw the emergence of Aryan 'naturalism', a discourse in which 'the stress is on the racial uniqueness of the Indo-Europeans'.¹⁷⁴ Arvidsson associated Aryan naturalism with anti-Semitism and suggested that Ernst Curtius was a typical representative. According to Arvidsson, in his *Griechische Geschichte* Curtius 'questioned how the influence of the Semitic Phoenicians on the Greeks could have been as great as some scholars implied. His counterargument was that the "Greeks had a national distaste for Semites" and that Phoenician influence on Greece is unlikely in view of "the natural opposition that exists between the two races."¹⁷⁵ Curtius was not immune to contemporary stereotypical views juxtaposing the Semitic peoples and the Aryan Greeks, although as we have seen, he was far from being an enthusiastic supporter of Indo-European Comparative Mythology. Moreover, in his *Griechische Geschichte*, in addition to referring to the Greeks' 'national aversion for the Semites', he also made such statements as: 'in general, the tribes more or less closely connected to the Greeks had a very vivid sense of racial separateness and a deep-rooted aversion to the

¹⁷¹ Curtius (1875a), p. 67.

¹⁷² 'Ohne Früheres und Späteres, ohne das lose Spiel der Poesie von dem religiösen Kern zu unterscheiden, pflegt man noch immer sämtliche Prädikate und Thätigkeiten, die den Gottheiten zugeschrieben wurden, als gleichwerthig und gleich echt an einander zu reihen, und dann den Scharfsinn daran zu üben, im Naturleben etwas aufzufinden, worauf möglicher Weise die ganze, bunte, scheinbar unvereinbare Mannigfaltigkeit von Charakterzügen sich vereinigen lasse' Curtius (1890), p. 37.

¹⁷³ Lehrs (1875), pp. 151–6.

¹⁷⁴ Arvidsson (2006), pp. 105–6.

¹⁷⁵ Arvidsson (2006), pp. 105–6. Cf. Arvidsson's statement that in his *Griechische Geschichte* Curtius intended to 'completely inoculate the Hellenes against all foreign influence, especially from the Semitic Phoenicians' Arvidsson (2006), p. 51.

Phoenicians, who were notorious across the archipelago for being violent and deceitful people.¹⁷⁶ However, Curtius' stance on the question of Phoenician influences on the Greeks in his (popularizing) *Griechische Geschichte* was in fact ambivalent, as noted by L. Ross at the time;¹⁷⁷ while, as we shall see, the thrust of his more specialized writings was to argue for extensive Phoenician influences on Greek religion.¹⁷⁸ But to stay for the moment on the *Griechische Geschichte*, we should note that Curtius' reference to a natural contrast between Aryan and Semites, which Arvidsson cites, actually occurs in the context of arguing for Semitic influences on the Aryans: 'because of the natural contrast that exists between their races, Aryans and Semites have most consequentially influenced one another, and indeed it was from the latter that the influences came, since they were culturally more advanced: in comparison to the more settled, steadier, and more ponderous Aryans, they were more mobile, more excitable and more inventive.'¹⁷⁹

In particular as regards Greek religion, whereas K.O. Müller and H. D. Müller had seen Greek polytheism primarily as the historical result of the interaction of Greek tribes Curtius expanded their approach by arguing for foreign and specifically Semitic influences.¹⁸⁰ A trip to the

¹⁷⁶ E. Curtius, *Griechische Geschichte*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1874, fourth edition), pp. 44, 38.

¹⁷⁷ L. Ross, 'Über Ernst Curtius' "Griechische Geschichte"', *Archäologische Aufsätze*, vol. II (Leipzig: Teubner, 1861), pp. 74–113 at p. 113.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Vick (2002), p. 498, E. Baltrusch, 'Curtius, Ernst', in Kuhlmann/Schneider (2014), pp. 130–1 at p. 131.

¹⁷⁹ Curtius (1874), p. 47.

¹⁸⁰ Vick draws attention to a wider trend in this direction in German scholarship of the period ignored by Bernal: 'Boeckh, Curtius and the ancient historian Max Duncker each insisted on the extent and fruitfulness of the cultural contacts between Greeks and other Near Eastern peoples. Curtius and Duncker in particular emphasized the role of the Phoenicians as cultural mediators.' Vick (2002), p. 498. L. Ross (1806–1859) may also be mentioned in this context: Petersen (1864), p. 49. Mannhardt observed that the interest of historians during this period in Phoenician influences on Greek culture followed on J. Olshausen's researches into the Phoenician origins of Greek place-names: Mannhardt (1877), p. xxv. On Olshausen see Marchand (2009), pp. 85–6. In Britain, one may draw a comparison with Gladstone, who, if on different grounds, also argued for Semitic influences on Greek religion: 'This Phoenician influence reaches far into the sphere of mythology', 'under the cover of the Phoenician name, we can trace the channels, through which the old parental East poured into the fertile soil of the Greek mind the seeds of civilization in very many (to speak moderately) of its most conspicuous provinces.' W.E. Gladstone, *Juventus Mundi. The Gods and Men of the Heroic Age* (London: Macmillan, 1869), pp. vi, 129. R. Brown (1844–1912), a self-styled representative of the 'Aryo-Semitic school',

Aegean islands had alerted him to their function as bridges between the Greek mainland and the East. The first volume of his *Griechische Geschichte* opened with a section on *Land und Volk* and on the very first page Curtius stated: 'sea and air bind the coasts of the Archipelago together into a whole.'¹⁸¹

As we saw, several earlier scholars like Welcker had tended to argue that Near Eastern influences on the Greeks were confined to the realm of material culture. Aphrodite constituted an exception as she was widely regarded at the time (even by Welcker) as a Phoenician goddess to have entered the Greek world via Cyprus.¹⁸² For Curtius, the introduction of the Phoenician worship of Aphrodite to the Greek world was not an isolated phenomenon. In his eyes, the classical scholars' distinction between the material and the spiritual sphere was arbitrary. Curtius stated that 'the only right way appears to me to be that one tries to define with increasing sharpness the impact of the Near East on Greece in the area of religious life just as in the areas of the sciences, arts and inventions'.¹⁸³ Recalling the portrayal of 'Oriental' religions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Curtius argued that the 'Orient' was pantheistic and that Oriental worships typically consisted in the worship of a Nature-goddess: 'a force of nature, conceived as female and not further divided according

who was of the view that a 'great mass of Semitic influence... is to be found throughout the length and breadth of Hellas' in his tellingly entitled *Semitic Influence in Hellenic Mythology* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1898), p. ix, provides a further British parallel. On Brown see Dorson (1968), pp. 177–81.

¹⁸¹ E. Curtius, *Griechische Geschichte*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1857a), p. 3. Kekulé (1896), pp. 7–8. Ross likewise appealed to his own experience of sea travel in the Aegean in discussing the question of how approachable Greece had been to navigators from the East in antiquity: Ross, 'Morgenland und Griechenland', Ross II (1861), pp. 2–3, Pittsches (2005), p. 254. One may further compare Bachofen's observation upon visiting Nauplion: 'Solche geographischen Verhältnisse haben für den Gang der alten Kulturverbreitung die höchste Bedeutung. In tiefen zahlreichen Buchten öffnet Griechenland sein Herz den Einflüssen von Osten her.' Schmidt (1927), p. 106.

¹⁸² Curtius (1875a), p. 55. On the debate between advocates of an 'Oriental' and a Greek origin for Aphrodite from the late nineteenth century onwards see V. Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite Grecque* (Athens/Liège: Centre international d'étude de la religion grecque antique, 1994), pp. 1–6. For current theories on the origins of Aphrodite see further S.L. Budin, *The Origin of Aphrodite* (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2003), M.S. Cyrino, *Aphrodite* (Oxford/New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 18–25.

¹⁸³ Curtius (1875a), p. 68.

to the natural realms, fills the faith of the peoples of Asia.¹⁸⁴ In his view, deities like Belit, Istar, Nana, or Annat all stood for 'the force of nature itself, the moist foundation of all becoming, the conceiving, untiringly child-bearing and nurturing womb of all fertility'.¹⁸⁵ Titles of general significance such as 'Queen of the world' or 'Mother of the gods' indicated that these deities had been conceived as having unlimited power.¹⁸⁶ The notion that Near Eastern religions were pantheistic and that they entailed the worship of an omnipotent Nature-goddess as opposed to the plastic forms of Greek polytheism at the centre of which stood the male Zeus is typical of the conceptualization of the religious contrast between East and West in a large segment of contemporary scholarship on Greek religion.¹⁸⁷

Curtius further called attention to the work of the Semitic scholar, F.C. Movers (1806–56), author of *Die Phönizier* (1841), which, he argued, had made it possible to retrace the Sidonian and Tyrian sea-routes across the Eastern Mediterranean.¹⁸⁸ In Curtius' view, the numerous sanctuaries of female deities along the western coastline of Asia Minor and on the islands of the Eastern Aegean indicated that with the Phoenician colonial expansion the worship of the Semitic Nature-goddess was carried into the Greek world 'with a core of similar concepts, with a number of similar symbols, gaining entrance everywhere, adapting to the character of the individual tribes and cities and irresistibly spreading under the most diverse names through all parts of the Mediterranean'.¹⁸⁹ According to Curtius, Aphrodite, Artemis, Athena, Demeter and Hera were all to be recognized as variations

¹⁸⁴ Curtius (1875a), pp. 69–70. One may compare Gerhard's view that the 'Erd und Göttermutter' was a predominant religious idea of the 'asiatische Menschheit': Gerhard (1854b), p. 483.

¹⁸⁵ Curtius (1875a), pp. 55–6.

¹⁸⁶ '... sie regieren allein, sie beherrschen die Welt, sie walten zu Land und zu Wasser, sind Göttinnen des Kriegs und des Handels.' Curtius (1875a), p. 60.

¹⁸⁷ In the early twentieth-century scholars like Farnell would argue that 'at the period when the Aryan conquerors were pushing their way into Aegean lands and the Indo-Iranians into the Punjaub and Mesopotamia, they had a religious bias making for the supremacy of the Father-God and against the supremacy of the goddess'. Farnell (1911), p. 95. Cf. '... where we find in historic Greece the Goddess-cult predominant, and especially the prevalence of a virgin-goddess, we should recognize the Minoan-Mycenaean tradition in antagonism to the "Aryan," the latter invariably maintaining the predominance of the God.' Farnell (1921), p. 24.

¹⁸⁸ Curtius (1875a), p. 54. Movers himself had argued for massive Semitic influences on Greek religion: Petersen (1864), p. 50.

¹⁸⁹ Curtius (1875a), p. 66.

of this Near Eastern goddess.¹⁹⁰ To support this theory Curtius drew on evidence from numismatics and archaeology. Thus he cited the view of Martin Leake (1777–1860) that the similarity of the female heads depicted on the coins of Aphrodisias to the representations of Artemis of Ephesos suggested that ‘the Juno of Samos, the Diana of Ephesos, the Venus of Aphrodisias were all originally the same Syrian goddess’.¹⁹¹ Moreover, Curtius argued that finds from Olympia and Athens indicated that the major Greek goddesses went back to a single divine type: ‘so old idols of Hera have now been found in Olympia where Hera is not at all to be distinguished from Aphrodite. Thus the monuments also now show that the female deities were originally one and only gradually became differentiated and individualized through localization. We now also have images of Athena from Athens, with none of the later attributes of Athena.’¹⁹² If Artemis of Ephesos and Hera of Samos retained the omnipotent characteristics of their Semitic prototype, Curtius maintained that on the European mainland the pantheistic worship of the Semitic Nature-goddess underwent crucial modification. At a first level, the attempt was made ‘to delimit more sharply the divine concept and to conceive it as a personality’.¹⁹³ At a further level, the Semitic goddess lost her omnipotence as she was placed by the side of Zeus in the position of wife, mistress or daughter.¹⁹⁴ The emphasis on the subordination of the Near Eastern Nature-goddess to the male Greek Zeus highlights the contrast between the ‘manly’ Greeks whose supreme deity was male and spiritual and the (effeminate) Near Eastern followers of nature goddesses like Istar or Nana. As in

¹⁹⁰ Curtius (1875a), pp. 60–5. There is a close parallel between Curtius’ and Gerhard’s views on the origins of the Greek goddesses. According to Gerhard, most Greek goddesses derived from a single goddess, a formally vague defined Pelasgian Earth and Mother-goddess: E. Gerhard, *Über das Metroon zu Athen und über die Göttermutter der griechischen Mythologie* (Berlin: Königliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1851), pp. 7, 13. Gerhard later argued that the majority of Greek goddesses were of Asian origins: Gerhard (1854b), p. 483. With Evans’ discoveries the theory would be advanced that all Greek goddesses derived from a Minoan Great Mother Goddess: M. Hamilton Swindler, *Cretan Elements in the Cults and Ritual of Apollo* (Bryn Mawr, 1913), p. 9.

¹⁹¹ M. Leake, *Numismata Hellenica. Suppl. Asia* (London, 1859), p. 21, cited in Curtius (1875a), p. 60.

¹⁹² Curtius to his brother, 2 February 1880, in Curtius II (1913), p. 160.

¹⁹³ Curtius (1875a), p. 60.

¹⁹⁴ Curtius (1875a), pp. 60–1, 70.

the case of K.O. Müller or H.D. Müller, we see the reproduction of contemporary stereotypical contrasts between West and East.¹⁹⁵

The Indo-European theory with its basis on what seemed to be the irrefutable scientific evidence of Comparative Linguistics appeared to provide the definitive comparative context in which to study Greek religion. Curtius' call to turn the focus of attention from the area of language to geography and archaeology and his argumentation for influences from the Semitic world contributed to the supersession of Indo-European Comparative Mythology. It also contributed to the undermining of Renan's view that there was a sharp contrast between the Aryan and Semitic religions and of the broader contrast between Greeks and Jews in contemporary thought.¹⁹⁶ Curtius acknowledged that his theory, seemingly blurring the boundaries between Greek and 'barbaric', would be disturbing to many classical scholars.¹⁹⁷ He spoke of a conflict between philology and archaeology and expressed surprise at how deeply rooted was the prejudice which dictated that it was a 'a sacred duty of the philologist, to isolate the land of the Hellenes with its open coasts and its people who were eager to learn when their culture was young and to pull them out from the context

¹⁹⁵ Such tendencies proved highly persistent in scholarship. Thus in the 1920s W.F. Otto would argue under Nietzsche's influence that the (Christian) 'Verweiblichung des europäischen Menschen ging von Vorderasien aus' and that it contrasted with the Greek accomplishment 'über das Weib im Menschen Herr geworden zu sein'. Otto (1923), pp. 105, 125. Cf. H. Cancik, *Antik, Modern* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1998), pp. 156–7. We may note that for Bachofen, 'das Mutterrecht keinem bestimmten Volke, sondern einer Kulturstufe angehört, dass es mithin in Folge der Gleichartigkeit und Gesetzmässigkeit der menschlichen Natur durch keine volkliche Verwandtschaft bedingt oder begränzt sein kann'. Bachofen (1861), p. vi.

¹⁹⁶ Wilamowitz came to argue that 'der hellenische cultus den Semiten unvergleichlich näher steht als den östlichen Arieren': Wilamowitz (1895a), p. xii. In Britain, the sharp distinction between the religion of the Aryan Greeks and of the Semites was, as mentioned, sustainedly challenged by the Christianocentric perspective of Gladstone who argued that 'there appears to be found a very strong presumption, that the Hellenic portion of the Aryan family had for a time preserved to itself, in broad outline, no small share of those treasures, of which the Semitic family of Abraham were to be the appointed guardians, on behalf of all mankind, until the fullness of time should come'. Gladstone (1869), p. 288. On the opposition between the Greeks and the Jews in nineteenth-century thought see Leonard (2012).

¹⁹⁷ 'Freilich hört dann Aphrodite auf die "allein fremde" Gottheit, die einzige Ausländerin im griechischen Olymp zu sein, und die Grenzen zwischen Hellenen und Barbaren verwischen sich auf eine für viele Hellenisten unheimliche Weise.' Curtius (1875a), p. 66.

of the history of peoples'.¹⁹⁸ To pre-empt criticism, he stressed that his theory did not pose a threat to the originality of the Greek achievements in the field of religion. Rather, he asked: 'Is not now a deeper gaze being directed into the workshops of the Hellenic spirit, when we see how humanly and beautifully it shaped the formless idea which the Orient could express only through the accumulation of symbolic signs, how it lifted the principle of fertility and of the sustainment of life from the sphere of sensuality with ethical power and transfigured it?'¹⁹⁹ As Most notes, the claim that the Greeks transfigured what they had received from abroad, which went back

¹⁹⁸ Curtius (1890), pp. 27–8. In the 1920s, Reitzenstein would still remark of philologists: 'wir empfinden die Annahme einer Entlehnung in das echte Hellenentum fast wie die Verletzung eines Dogmas von der Originalität des griechischen Geisteslebens, wenn wir auch—durch den Spaten belehrt—Abhängigkeit der griechischen Kunst und Kultur vom Orient zugeben müssen.' R. Reitzenstein, 'Alt-Griechische Theologie und ihre Quellen', in F. Saxl (ed.), *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg 1924–1925* (Leipzig/Berlin: Teubner, 1927), pp. 1–19 at p. 2. On the challenge of archaeology to philology see Marchand (1996), p. xx. Curtius' claim about a conflict between philologists and archaeologists on the question of Eastern influences overlooked that among classical philologists there were also those interested in foreign influences on the Greek language. In addition, as Marchand points out, archaeologists like H. Brunn attempted to downplay Eastern influences: Marchand (1996), pp. 110–11.

¹⁹⁹ Curtius (1875a), p. 66. Cf. 'Erkennen wir nicht jetzt erst, wie aus dem unplastischen Pantheismus des Orients durch hellenischen Kunsttrieb freie lebensvolle Personen, aus der einen weltbürgerlichen Naturgottheit nationalen Götter hervorgegangen sind?' Curtius (1875a), p. 66. One may compare Gerhard's view: 'Es kann dann nicht fehlen, dass uns die Mehrzahl, vielleicht wol gar die Gesamtheit, der griechischen Gottheiten aus fremden Keim erwachsen erscheine; der selbständige Werth ihrer durch Andacht und Poesie gleich erhabenen Göttergestalten wird, wo das Gewächs seine Wurzel so mächtig überragt, nach jener Voraussetzung fremden Ursprungs nur noch geeigneter sein den schöpferischen Geist der Hellenen in volstem Glanze, die Mythologie seiner Götter und Helden als ein alle anderen Mythologien überragendes Produkt ihres gottbedürftigen und gottahnenden Dichtergeistes uns vorzuführen.' Gerhard (1854b), p. 484. In Britain, Gladstone suggested that 'the main question is not the actual possession of this or that accomplishment, of this or that institution; it is the possession of the quality, in soul or body, which is adapted first to receive the gift as into a genial bed, and then so to develop its latent capabilities as to carry them onwards, and upwards, to its perfection. Among all the gifts of the great nations of modern Europe, how many are there which we can affirm to be, in each case, absolutely original?' Gladstone (1869), p. 134. In the 1920s, Reitzenstein still felt compelled to criticize the attachment of classical scholars to the notion of Greek originality and to reiterate: 'Nicht die Originalität werden wir dann glauben bei dem einzelnen Volke suchen und verteidigen zu müssen—sie ist, im vollen Sinne, am einzelnen wie an einem Volk ein recht zweifelhaftes Lob, ja unverträglich mit wirklicher Kultur—, wohl aber die Individualität, die Kraft, das Übernommene nach dem eigenen Wesen umzugestalten und zu adeln.' Reitzenstein (1927), p. 19.

to Plato, constituted a common argument employed at the time in an effort to preserve the specialness of the Greeks while acknowledging foreign influences on Greek culture.²⁰⁰ The celebration of the Greek transformation of 'Oriental' pantheism and of the transfiguration of the material and the sensual into the ethical and the spiritual²⁰¹ constituted key aspects of the contemporary idealizing and partly racist opposition between Greece and the 'Orient'. In this context, it should be emphasized that, despite his criticism of the sharp separation of the Greeks from their foreign neighbours, for Curtius, the contrast between the Greeks and the 'Barbarians' remained 'a contrast which moved the history of humankind' [*ein die Geschichte der Menschheit bewegender Gegensatz*] and that he called upon his contemporaries to stand for the superiority of the spiritual over the sensual and continue the fight that the Greeks had waged against everything excessive and unnatural.²⁰²

What is more, Curtius' case for the Semitic origins of the Greek goddesses was so presented as to appeal to the pious. In an essay suggestively entitled 'Paulus in Athen', Curtius argued that Pauline thought had been infused with Greek culture and philosophy.²⁰³ This he portrayed as the culminating point of the age-old process of historical interaction and influence between the Aryans and the Semites in the Eastern Mediterranean, of which Greek religion had also formed part.²⁰⁴ Together with Nägelsbach's and Welcker's, Curtius' writings exemplify one of the most emphatic attempts in German scholarship of the period to depict Greek religion and Greek antiquity more broadly as anticipating Christianity.²⁰⁵

We have seen how especially since the appearance of Bernal's *Black Athena* the role of racism in nineteenth-century German historiography has been an object of debate. The fact that scholars like Curtius or Gerhard felt compelled to justify their approach in anticipation of

²⁰⁰ Most (2003), pp. 84–5.

²⁰¹ Cf. E. Curtius, 'Die Hellenen und das Volk Israel' (1872), *Alterthum und Gegenwart. Gesammelte Reden und Vorträge*, vol. II (Berlin: Hertz, 1882), pp. 1–14 at p. 6.

²⁰² Curtius (1872), pp. 6–7.

²⁰³ E. Curtius, 'Paulus in Athen', in Curtius II (1894), pp. 527–43. On further attempts at 'rapprochement' between Aryans and Semites in the scholarship of the period see Olender (1989).

²⁰⁴ Curtius, *Paulus in Athen*, p. 540.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Marchand (1996), p. 77. In Britain, we may once again compare Gladstone, who drawing on Nägelsbach and Welcker, portrayed the 'Olympian system' as 'a precursor to Christianity' Gladstone (1869), pp. xxv, 374–7.

negative reactions indicates how the question of foreign influences on Greek culture remained highly controversial throughout the nineteenth century, in part because of racial prejudice.²⁰⁶ To suggest however, that Curtius' own work represented an anti-Semitic current in German scholarship and that its aim was to minimize the Greek debt to the Phoenicians is, for all the ambivalent attitude in the *Griechische Geschichte*, misleading. On the contrary, as we have seen, his work attests to the important role that archaeology could play in calling for the question of foreign influences in Greece to be revisited without bias—at least not against the Semitic peoples. For Curtius' correspondence implies a bias against the 'Hamitic' peoples: in a letter to his brother he asked 'were the Hellenes idolaters?', to answer 'Idolatry was imported in the case of all Aryan peoples, also in the case of the Semites. The children of Ham, these are the true idolaters. The germs of the worship of idols were brought to Greece from the descendants of Ham, directly or indirectly.'²⁰⁷

Curtius' idealizing and Christianizing tendency also informed his portrayal of Apollo in his *Griechische Geschichte*. Curtius deviated from the tradition of K.O. Müller and H.D. Müller in that he regarded Apollo as well as being of non-Greek origins. He suggested that it was possible to establish the ways in which his worship had reached Greece from the Near East.²⁰⁸ However, he placed the greatest emphasis on the transformation that Apollo underwent once he reached Greece. In his eyes, the worship of Apollo as it developed in the archaic and classical period was one of the most momentous events in Greek history. 'In the entire religious life of the Greeks,' he maintained, 'there is no greater epoch to recognize than the appearance of Apollo; it is like a new day of Creation in the history of their spiritual development.'²⁰⁹ At a first level, Curtius saw in Apollo, the prophet of Zeus, a force standing for order and monotheism amidst

²⁰⁶ Cf. Vick (2002), p. 498.

²⁰⁷ Curtius to his brother, 1 December 1853, in Curtius I (1913), p. 424.

²⁰⁸ 'Auch Apollon ist kein Eingeborener; man kann die Wege nachweisen, auf denen er von Osten herüberkam' Curtius (1872), p. 3.

²⁰⁹ Curtius (1857a), pp. 47–8. In this respect as well, there is a parallel between Curtius and Gerhard who celebrated the transformation of Apollo from, in his view, a Pelasgian sun-deity to a more spiritually and ethically conceived god, who 'erscheint jedoch mehr denn irgend eine andere griechische Gottheit in voller Entwicklung des hellenischen Geistes'. Gerhard (1854a), pp. 285, 306.

the chaos of Greek polytheism.²¹⁰ At a further level, he celebrated Apolline *katharsis*. He stated that with Apollo's purification of Orestes, 'the terrifying power of the Furies was broken; a world of higher harmony, a kingdom of Grace was founded'.²¹¹ Curtius extolled, in particular, the role of Apollo at Delphi: 'in this Apollo Hellenic polytheism received its completion and the highest transfiguration of which it was capable'.²¹² He depicted Pythian Apollo as representing an ethical ideal, which, emanating from Delphi, the 'spiritual centre' of Greece, formatively influenced every aspect of Greek culture and especially moral consciousness. Under its impact, 'everything we value in Hellenic arts and virtues developed'.²¹³ Curtius underlined the qualities of moderation, restraint of sensuality and sober-mindedness prescribed by the god at Delphi.²¹⁴ He further laid stress on the point that the inner state of the worshipper was of greater importance to the god at Delphi than his actions: 'it is only this [the Apolline worship] which in all seriousness proclaimed every external religious practice worthless if the human heart and mind was not in an attitude of worship... the pure god demanded a pure heart'.²¹⁵ In stressing the priority of the role of the heart over external action, Curtius arguably displayed again the influence of Schleiermacher. Within a few decades this view would suffer a blow as Robertson Smith's thesis that ancient polytheisms placed emphasis on rituals

²¹⁰ '...inmitten der Unruhe und Zerfahrenheit des hellenischen Polytheismus gerade die apollinische Religion das Bewusstsein von der geistigen Ueberlegenheit des Götterkönigs und damit den Kern einer wahren Religion unerschütterlich festhielt.' Curtius (1857a), p. 400. Cf. 'Der wüsten Vielgötterei wird diejenige Einheit gegeben, welche jeder Religion unentbehrlich ist.' Curtius (1872), p. 3. In Britain, Gladstone depicted Apollo as the messianic 'Deliverer of the Immortals': Gladstone (1869), pp. 260, 270, 274. On Matthew Arnold's Christianizing portrayal of Apollo see Jenkyns (1980), p. 203.

²¹¹ Curtius (1857a), p. 48.

²¹² Curtius (1857a), p. 48. Christ has called attention to the contrast between Curtius' idealized portrayal of Greece and the pessimistic Greece of Burckhardt and notes that 'Es ist gerade diese Verklärung Delphis gewesen, die Burckhardt dann zu den berühmten negativen Gegenbildern provoziert hat, dem Bild von der fragwürdigen Einheit des Griechentums selbst im Bereiche der Religion und dem anderen, unvergeßlichen, Delphi als "das große monumentale Museum des Hasses von Griechen gegen Griechen, mit höchster künstlerischer Verewigung des gegenseitig angeganen Herzeleids.'" K. Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff. Leben und Werk führender althistoriker der Neuzeit* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989), p. 77.

²¹³ Curtius (1872), p. 3.

²¹⁴ Curtius (1857a), p. 401.

²¹⁵ Curtius (1857a), p. 400.

rather than on the inner disposition of the worshippers would gain ground.

Curtius' portrayal of Apollo is an heir to K.O. Müller's portrayal of Apollo in *Die Dorier*. They are the two chief specimens of what Rohde would dismissively refer to as the 'enlightened Apollo of Göttingen'.²¹⁶ For the last three-quarters of the nineteenth century, K.O. Müller's and Curtius' Apollo offered the main alternative to the solar Apollo of scholars in the physical tradition. These two rival versions of Apollo neatly epitomize two chief ways in which nineteenth-century German scholarship until at least the 1890s understood and idealized Greek religion—the ethical and the physical. Although there had always been voices of criticism, they would both start to be effectively challenged only in the last years of the nineteenth century. As mentioned, Christ suggests that the antipode to Curtius' idealized view of Greek culture was the pessimistic Greece of Burckhardt.²¹⁷ With respect to Greek religion, the antipode to Curtius were scholars like Nietzsche, Rohde or Harrison who protested against his approach much more influentially than Ross had done and who preferred the ecstasy of Dionysos to the aloof restraint and brilliance of Apollo. Yet if the conception of Greek religion of which the 'enlightened Apollo' was the most emblematic figure came under severe threat in the last couple of decades of the nineteenth century, it was not eclipsed. Its impact reached deep into the twentieth century, resonating in the work of Wilamowitz, and, arguably, even of Nilsson. Although Wilamowitz had no taste for Curtius' classicizing tendency,²¹⁸ several aspects of his account of Apollo in his 1908 lecture at Oxford are reminiscent of his former teacher's view of Apollo. Wilamowitz famously suggested that Apollo was not of Greek, but rather of Lycian origins. He also objected to the view that Apollo was a solar god.²¹⁹ He further extolled Delphi: 'there has now arisen

²¹⁶ Quoted in Crusius (1902), p. 55. An earlier critic of Curtius' portrayal of Apollo was Ross who had no patience for 'dies enfant terrible, dieser "Gott des Adels" . . . mit seiner besondern "Religion" und seiner rührigen Priesterschaft, der zugleich "Nationalgott" der Dorier wie der Ionier ist' L. Ross, 'Ueber Ernst Curtius' "Griechische Geschichte."', *Archäologische Aufsätze* II (1861), pp. 74–113 at p. 111.

²¹⁷ Christ (1988), pp. 243–4.

²¹⁸ 'Curtius enttäuschte. Er hat in den Vorlesungen in demselben Tone die klassizistische Begeisterung zur Schau getragen wie in den Festreden.' Wilamowitz (1928), p. 97, Wilamowitz (1921) [1998], p. 69.

²¹⁹ U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, *Greek Historical Writing and Apollo* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), pp. 28, 31–2. On Wilamowitz's Oxford lecture on Apollo see Fowler (2009), pp. 188–96. Although, as mentioned, Wilamowitz opposed the

something which deserves the name of religion in a higher sense, a community of faith which even passes beyond the boundaries of the nation . . . and which, though, like every real religion, morality is neither its cause nor its aim, ends nevertheless by exerting a conscious moral influence.²²⁰ Like K.O. Müller and Curtius Wilamowitz also sharply dissociated the Apolline worship from mysticism: 'It renounces the whole domain of mysticism . . . it renounces that disburdening of the soul which takes place in all forms of ecstasy.'²²¹ The end of Nilsson's account of Apollo in his *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion* also evokes the 'Apollo of Göttingen': 'And so Apollo became the most Greek of all the gods: the luminous, sublime youth, the protector of music and spiritual life, of moderation and rational order. It is of very little importance for Greek religion what he originally was; all that matters is what the Greeks made him. The ennoblement of the ancient god from Asia Minor and his elevation *to the expression of authentic Greekness* [my emphasis] is one of the greatest intellectual feats of the Greek people.'²²²

The historical-critical approach contributed to the appearance of a spate of regional studies of Greek religion in the late nineteenth century, such as W. Immerwahr's *Die Kulte und Mythen Arkadiens* (1891) or S. Wide's *Lakonische Kulte* (1893).²²³ The view that Greek polytheism had been the end-product of the coming together of tribal gods and that each god tended to be 'a complete and full god' were later reiterated by Curtius' student, Otto Kern (1863–1942).²²⁴ As we shall see, the view of the Greek gods as universal gods also reappears in the work of W.F. Otto while the issue of divine omnipotence is receiving renewed attention in current scholarship in the writings of Parker and Versnel. To go back to the historical-critical approach, in

'non-scientific' idealization of Greece, he may be seen, as Christ notes, as being, in some respects, in Curtius' idealizing tradition: Christ (1999), pp. 65–6.

²²⁰ Wilamowitz (1908), p. 36.

²²¹ Wilamowitz (1908), p. 42.

²²² Nilsson (1941), p. 532.

²²³ Bloch (1905), p. 451.

²²⁴ '... die Vielgötterei erst zustande gekommen sein kann, als die Stämme aus ihrer Isolierung hervortraten . . . jede Gottheit ist ein ganzer und voller Gott und duldet keine anderen Götter neben sich.' O. Kern, *Ueber die Anfänge der hellenischen Religion* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1902), p. 21. We may note that in contemporary scholarship Polinskaya re-draws attention to the question of the formation and development of the polytheistic worships of early Greek communities, emphasizing that 'In the period between 950 and 700 BCE, sanctuaries are few and far between, and each seems to highlight a particular deity rather than a polytheistic group.' Polinskaya (2013), pp. 381–2.

1921 Farnell would still argue against its fundamental premise: 'We must not then apply to the pre-Homeric period of Greek religion the formula, "one tribe one God," but must imagine that religion had already surmounted in some degree the tribal barriers.'²²⁵ As Nilsson observed, eventually 'the historical school became the neo-historical, which discarded most of the tribe-mythology and devoted itself above all to establishing, by means of a study of literary and artistic traditions, the older form of the myths and their development through the ages.' In the field of Greek religion its most eminent representative would be Wilamowitz.²²⁶ Since the last decades of the twentieth century, there has been a tendency in scholarship to focus on religion in the context of the Greek polis.²²⁷ The old regional and tribal approach may serve as a reminder of forms of collective religion in Greece beyond the polis.

²²⁵ Farnell (1921), p. 23.

²²⁶ M.P. Nilsson, *A History of Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), pp. 42–3. On the (neo-) historical school see further H. Pinard de la Boullaye, *L'Étude Comparée des Religions* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1929, third edition), pp. 413–15. Wissowa stands out as a representative in the case of Roman religion.

²²⁷ Burkert (2011), p. 16. Key texts have been Sourvinou-Inwood's 'What is *Polis* Religion?', in R. Buxton (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 13–37, and 'Further Aspects of *Polis* Religion', in Buxton (2000), pp. 38–55; Parker (2011), pp. 57–61. For an overview of the history of the interest in polis religion see J. Kindt, *Rethinking Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 3–4, 12–35. For criticism of the polis religion model see W. Burkert, 'Greek *Poleis* and Civic Cults: Some Further Thoughts', in M. H. Hansen/K. Raafaub (eds.), *Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1995), pp. 201–10 at pp. 202–3, Kindt (2012), pp. 12–35.

Ancient Polytheisms and Modern Antagonisms

Hermann Usener's Theory of *Sondergötter*

The polar opposite to Curtius' theory of 'universal' gods was the theory of *Sondergötter* advanced by H. Usener. Famously hailed by A. Dieterich as the 'ἡρως κτίστης der modernen Religionswissenschaft',¹ Hermann Usener (1834–1905) was born in Weilburg an der Lahn in Nassau. In a letter written in 1879, Usener stated that his visits to his pastor brother's house with its library endowed with theological writings contributed to the development of his interest in the history of religion.² Usener began his studies in 1853 attending the universities of Heidelberg, Munich, Göttingen, and Bonn. At the time, Bonn was at the height of its reputation as a centre for classical philology. Usener's teachers there included three of the most eminent figures of nineteenth-century German classical scholarship, F.W. Ritschl (1806–76), O. Jahn (1813–69) and Welcker.³ In 1866, Usener was appointed in Bonn as a successor of Ritschl. With his friend and colleague, F. Bücheler (1837–1908), he formed a formidable academic duo who preserved and expanded Bonn's reputation as a leading place for classical studies.⁴

¹ A. Dieterich, 'Hermann Usener', *Kleine Schriften* (Leipzig/Berlin: Teubner, 1911), pp. 354–62 at p. 361.

² Usener to Zeller, 5 October 1879, n. 1, in D. Ehlers, *Diels, Usener, Zeller Briefwechsel*, vol. II (Berlin: Akademie, 1992), p. 399. J.N. Bremmer, 'Hermann Usener', in Briggs/Calder (1990), pp. 462–78 at pp. 462–3.

³ On Welcker's influence on Usener see Henrichs (1986), pp. 226–8, *Espagne* (2011b).

⁴ H. Herter, 'Die klassische Philologie seit Usener und Bücheler', *Bonner Gelehrte. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Wissenschaften in Bonn. Philosophie und*

Several of the most famous German classical scholars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries studied at Bonn with Usener, including Nietzsche, Wilamowitz, Diels, Deubner, and Norden. Momigliano aptly called him *praeceptor Germaniae*.⁵

Usener's scholarly interests were broad, ranging from literature and textual criticism to the study of ancient religions.⁶ Outstanding among his writings on the latter is his *Götternamen. Versuch einer Lehre von den religiösen Begriffsbildung* (1896). The outcome of decades of research and lecturing at the University of Bonn, it was, in his own words, his *Lebenswerk*.⁷ In the foreword to the *Götternamen*, Usener expressed dissatisfaction with the contemporary state of the study of mythology and, in particular, with the failure to produce scientific results.⁸ As we have seen, the search for a 'scientific' approach to the study of Greek religion was a recurrent theme in nineteenth-century scholarship. Usener provides a further example of a classical scholar modifying the methodology of Indo-European Comparative Mythology. In his studies, he employed an Indo-European comparative framework, albeit of a limited form. Moreover, like the leading exponents of Indo-European Comparative Mythology, Kuhn and Max Müller, Usener stressed that linguistic analysis was the primary, even the sole, tool for the study of the formation of the religious concepts of antiquity.⁹ In his view, however, one should compare not the names of the gods as Max Müller advocated, but rather their conceptions.¹⁰ At the level of methodology, therefore, there was to a certain extent a parallel between Roscher and Usener. In addition, Usener put forward

Altertumswissenschaften (Bonn: Bouvier, 1968), pp. 165–211 at pp. 165, 167. On the study of philology in nineteenth and twentieth century Bonn, see further Espagne (2011b).

⁵ A. Momigliano, 'New Paths of Classicism in the Nineteenth Century' (1982), in Bowersock/Cornell (1994), pp. 223–85 at p. 253, Schlesier (1994), pp. 195–6.

⁶ F. Bücheler, 'Gedächtnisrede auf Hermann Usener' (1905), *Kleine Schriften*, vol. III (Osnabrück: Zeller, 1965), pp. 324–9 at p. 328.

⁷ Bremmer (1990), p. 470.

⁸ Usener (1896), pp. v–vi.

⁹ Usener (1896), p. 5. M. Espagne and P. Rabault-F Feuerhahn, 'Einleitung', in Espagne/Rabault-F Feuerhahn (2011), pp. 7–16 at p. 11.

¹⁰ H. Usener, 'Mythologie' (1904), in A. Dieterich (ed.), *Vorträge und Aufsätze von Hermann Usener* (Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1907), pp. 37–65 at p. 41, Usener (1896), p. 330. Cf. Wessels (2003), p. 27, S. Fornaro, '»Mythos« und »Ritus« bei Hermann Usener', in Espagne/Rabault-F Feuerhahn (2011), pp. 171–83 at p. 178.

in part physical interpretations of the gods like other scholars in the tradition of Indo-European Comparative Mythology. However, as we shall see, his theory on the formation and development of Indo-European gods was distinctive.

In not allowing room for any method other than linguistic analysis, Usener was, like his teacher Welcker, being especially critical of philosophical attempts to retrace the mental processes responsible for early religion through speculation.¹¹ One of the primary targets of Usener's attack was Schelling, who, as we mentioned, had argued for a relative form of *Urmonotheismus*.¹² This went against the thrust of Usener's work which, as we shall see, was aimed at demonstrating that polytheism preceded monotheism.

In the beginning of the *Götternamen*, Usener stated his intention to investigate how the names of the ancient gods were formed. This he regarded as a crucial question that could shed light on the very emergence of polytheism.¹³ Usener focused on the emergence and development of divine conceptions in three Indo-European religions: Greek, Roman, and Lithuanian. His starting-point was the divine lists in the Roman pontifical books, the *Indigitamenta*, which contained names of gods that appeared to be specific to individual activities. Typically, the meaning of their names was transparent, designating their area of responsibility. By way of example, he cited such deities as the *Veruactor* and the *Reparator*, who were responsible for different stages of the cultivation of the fields.¹⁴ Usener noted that these gods tended neither to be conceived in fully personal terms nor to have myths attached to them. They therefore stood in stark contrast to the major gods of ancient polytheisms familiar from epic poetry: the latter were endowed with fully developed personalities and rich mythologies, and bore names with meanings that tended to be obscure. Varro had referred to the gods of the *Indigitamenta* as *di certi*.

¹¹ 'Die Wiedererkenntnis der geistigen Vorgänge, welche den Inhalt der Volksreligionen schufen, ist eine Aufgabe von besonderer Schwierigkeit, zu deren Lösung der Philosoph nicht das geringste mit hinzubringt; durch vorgreifende Spekulation aus gänzlich unzureichenden Voraussetzungen kann er nur stören und verwirren. Hier bedarf es philologischer Arbeit.' Usener (1904), p. 60. Cf. 'Von keiner Sphäre des menschlichen Geistes haben wir philosophische Spekulation ferner zu halten als von der Religion.' Usener (1904), p. 60.

¹² Usener (1896), p. 274. Usener also bemoaned speculative accounts by Hegelian philosophers: Usener (1904), pp. 59–60.

¹³ Usener (1896), p. 5.

¹⁴ Usener (1896), pp. 75ff.

On the suggestion of E. Lehmann, Usener used the term '*Sondergötter*' to designate them.¹⁵

Usener further considered a less well-known Indo-European religion, the pre-Christian religion of Lithuania. Christianity had spread at a late date in Lithuania. Despite extended missionary activity, Usener maintained that some of the old pagan ways had still not died out in his day. According to the testimony of a seventeenth-century Jesuit missionary, in the fringes of Eastern Europe one could observe the worship of gods who were '*singularium necessitatum proprii*'. Moreover, in his studies of European folklore, Mannhardt compared the various personifications observable in Lithuanian religion to the gods of the *Indigitamenta*. Drawing on these earlier observations and comparisons, Usener argued that the old Lithuanian gods provided examples of *Sondergötter*.¹⁶ In addition, Usener maintained that if one turned one's attention away from the major Greek gods, one could discern deities bearing the typical features of *Sondergötter* in Greek religion as well—for example, in the case of deities like Kalligeneia or Kourotrophos.¹⁷

According to Usener, *Sondergötter* provided 'the content of the original religious concept-formation and . . . the foundation of the later personal gods'.¹⁸ In his view, the evidence from three different religions (Greek, Roman, and Lithuanian) supported the hypothesis that the transition from *Sondergötter* to fully personal gods represented a wider religious phenomenon.¹⁹ Despite their great antiquity, however, the *Sondergötter* represented a generic category. As such, they could not have constituted the original conception of the divine, which, Usener argued, was associated with a single entity or phenomenon: 'the earliest spiritual conception could only be the grasping and naming of the single entity or of the single phenomenon. Prior to special concepts [*sonderbegriffe*] momentary- or single concepts [*augenblicksbegriffe oder einzelbegriffe*] must have been established.'²⁰ Accordingly, Usener suggested that prior to the stage of the *Sondergötter*, there had

¹⁵ Usener (1896), p. 75. H. Usener, 'Keraunos' (1905), *Kleine Schriften*, vol. IV (Leipzig/Berlin: Teubner, 1913), pp. 471–97 at p. 482. On the interest in the deities of the *Indigitamenta* in scholarship before Usener, see G. Wissowa, 'Echte und falsche "Sondergötter" in der römischen Religion', *Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur römischen Religions- und Stadtgeschichte* (Munich: Beck, 1904), pp. 304–26 at pp. 304–5.

¹⁶ Usener (1896), pp. 109ff.

¹⁷ Usener (1896), pp. 122ff.

¹⁸ Usener (1896), p. 279.

¹⁹ Usener (1896), p. 273.

²⁰ Usener (1896), p. 280.

been a stage of *Augenblicksgötter*, a term which he used to denote 'a religious concept, which is caused by a single phenomenon and does not rise above it'.²¹ In this context, it should be noted that in his *Indogermanischer Volksglaube* (1885), the Indo-European Comparative Mythologist Wilhelm Schwartz (1821–99) had laid stress on the significance of the *Reflex des Augenblickes* for the mental universe of early humans—which may have been a source of influence on Usener.²²

According to Usener, the stage of *Augenblicksgötter* was not a mere theoretical construction. He claimed to have found factual evidence in support of the existence of *Augenblicksgötter* in Lithuanian religion.²³ In his view, one was entitled to infer that the earliest stages of the Greek and Roman religions had also witnessed the worship of *Augenblicksgötter*. He called attention to evidence that, he believed, confirmed this inference. In his eyes, Parthenopaios' oath by his spear in the *Seven against Thebes*, for example, suggested that the weapon itself had once been thought of as a god.²⁴ Likewise, Usener held that the worship of Zeus under such titles as *Κεραυνός* or *Καταιβάτης* pointed to an original worship of thunders as independent *Augenblicksgötter*.²⁵

Having advanced the hypothesis that a limited number of major personal gods had been preceded by innumerable *Augenblicks-* and *Sondergötter*, Usener confronted the question of how it came that personal gods evolved out of the latter. At a first level, he suggested that certain *Sondergötter* had been more important and, hence, more powerful than the others. For example, the god who had been responsible for the protection of the family hearth had been more important than the god responsible for harrowing.²⁶ However, the existence of hierarchies among the *Sondergötter* did not suffice to explain the emergence of personal gods. Usener emphasized that the

²¹ Usener (1905), p. 482. Cf. 'In voller unmittelbarkeit wird die einzelne erscheinung vergöttlicht, ohne dass ein auch noch so begrenzter gattungsbegriff irgendwie hereinspielte: das eine ding, das du vor dir siehst, das selbst und nichts weiter ist der gott.' Usener (1896), p. 280.

²² W. Schwartz, *Indogermanischer Volksglaube. Ein Beitrag zur Religionsgeschichte der Urzeit* (Berlin: Seehagen, 1885), pp. vi–vii. In earlier scholarship Schrey points out that in the mythological writings of J.A. Kanne (1773–1824), 'Der religiös verehrte Sonnen-"gott" existiert nur in dem Augenblick, in dem Sonnenschein erfahren wird.' D. Schrey, *Mythos und Geschichte bei Johann Arnold Kanne und in der romantischen Mythologie* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969), p. 45.

²³ Usener (1896), pp. 280–2.

²⁴ Usener (1896), p. 285.

²⁵ Usener (1905), pp. 481–2.

²⁶ Usener (1896), p. 303.

condition for the emergence of personal gods was a *sprachgeschichtlicher vorgang*.²⁷ As de Vries notes, in advancing this view, Usener was in the tradition of earlier advocates of Indo-European Comparative Mythology like Max Müller.²⁸ In the course of time, the names of certain *Sondergötter* ceased to be understood. They thus became proper names. Usener held that it was only at this stage that the way was opened for the full development of their personality in myth. Once fully personal gods emerged, they started to absorb or to subordinate the remaining *Sondergötter*, especially those from related areas, the names of whom in some cases became attached to the names of the former in the form of epithets.²⁹

To illustrate the ground-breaking (as he claimed) implications of his theory, Usener intentionally selected the case of Apollo, citing Roscher's assertion that Apollo's solar origins were virtually uncontested in contemporary scholarship.³⁰ Usener reiterated that the real significance of the god, the starting-point of concept-formation, could only be discovered by linguistic analysis.³¹ Accordingly, Usener considered etymological alternatives for 'Apollon'. Rejecting conventional derivations such as from 'ἀπό' and 'ἄλλυμι', he argued that 'Apollon' was connected with the Latin verb 'pellere'. On this interpretation, 'Apollon' originally designated a *Sondergott* with an apotropaic function comparable to Jupiter Depulsor, whose title Usener also derived from 'pellere'.³² Epithets such Alexikakos or Apotropaios, which Apollo shared with other gods like Zeus and which denoted an apotropaic function, Usener regarded as originally independent designations of an apotropaic *Sondergott*.³³ As long as the meaning of his name remained intelligible, Apollo did not move past the status of a *Sondergott*. However, the meaning of his name eventually became obscure. Recalling Max Müller's account of the emergence of Indo-European myths, Usener suggested that this invited the telling of stories about Apollo which gradually led to the full development of his personality in myth. For Usener, Apollo's original apotropaic function remained, to a certain extent, his core function. At the same time, however, Usener also largely had recourse to

²⁷ Usener (1896), p. 316.

²⁸ De Vries (1961), p. 298.

²⁹ Usener (1896), pp. 316–17.

³⁰ Usener (1896), pp. 303–4.

³¹ Usener (1896), p. 304.

³² Usener (1896), pp. 304–12. Cf. Wessels (2003), p. 24.

³³ Usener (1896), p. 313.

physical interpretations in his account of Apollo.³⁴ As regards, for example, the arts of the muses and the playing of the lyre, he suggested that they could derive from the aversion of evil, whose most important tool were apotropaic chants, but equally they could come from the worship of light, which greeted the rising sun with singing and dancing.³⁵ In addition, he maintained that Apolline epithets like Chrysaoros suggested a solar dimension and that Apollo Agyieus was entrusted with the protection of roads because of the importance of the light and the sun for orientation.³⁶ We should note, however, that in his 'Mythologie', Usener maintained that in the case of most major gods, it was a futile endeavour to search for a single explanation for every one of their aspects.³⁷

What is arguably the most interesting aspect about Usener's partial use of physical interpretations is his apparently sympathetic stance towards the ancient worship of light. Usener suggested that the worship of deities of heavenly light not only was evident in the case of Indo-European religions, but also had deep roots in all human-kind.³⁸ It had been so powerful that it had penetrated Christianity.³⁹ Usener argued that Christianity managed to overcome the worship of Sol Invictus by hailing Christ as the 'Sun of Justice'.⁴⁰ As we shall see, Usener tended to be highly critical of what he perceived to be pagan influences or remnants in Christianity. In the case of the worship of light, however, he seems to show understanding and sympathy. Thus he stated that 'the concept of heavenly light elevates us to the highest

³⁴ On Usener's broader partial use of physical interpretations see L. Deubner, 'Hermann Usener', *Biographisches Jahrbuch für die Altertumswissenschaft* 31, 1908, pp. 53–74 at p. 58, Graf (1993), p. 27. Cf. Bremmer (1990), p. 466. Usener also assumed a lunar interpretation for Artemis in his essay 'Kallone' (1868), *Kleine Schriften*, vol. IV (1913), pp. 1–93 and a solar interpretation for Apollo Pasparios in 'Pasparios' (1894), *Kleine Schriften*, vol. IV (1913), pp. 182–94.

³⁵ Usener (1896), p. 334.

³⁶ Usener (1896), p. 190.

³⁷ 'Bei den meisten namhafteren Göttern des Kultus ist es ein vergebliches Bemühen, den Punkt zu suchen, von dem sich alle übrigen Züge des Bildes ungezwungen und folgerichtig ableiten ließen: die Erfahrung sollte das lehren. Götter und Heroen sind nicht Persönlichkeiten, von denen sich gleichsam eine Biographie entwerfen ließe.' Usener (1904), pp. 39–40.

³⁸ Usener's discussion of light worship in the *Götternamen* is cited in F. Böckelmann, D. Kamper, and W. Seitter (eds.), *Der Sonnenkult* (Bodenheim: Syndikat, 1999), pp. 24–30.

³⁹ Cf. Espagne (2011b), p. 32.

⁴⁰ Usener (1896), p. 184, H. Usener, 'Sol Invictus', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 60, 1905, pp. 465–91.

summit of religious feelings and thoughts'.⁴¹ Moreover, in the context of reviewing a work on astrology in Greek antiquity, Usener also launched an attack on superstition which was infused with metaphors of light and darkness:

'... a product of highly developed culture, embellished with scientific consistency, the system of the superstition of the stars is an admonition to us humans, that we wrongly think of ourselves as children of light. We are called to light, but are born and grown up in darkness. Centuries, millennia go by; the shadows of universal night break and retreat only slowly, and the human mind laboriously and slowly struggles to rise out of the darkness to light.'⁴²

In addition, Usener stressed that from Julian to Hölderlin, the worship of heavenly light was seen as the most attractive feature of Greek religion.⁴³ Usener's appreciation of light-worship recalls the sympathy for nature-worship that we have encountered in the case of other scholars in the physical tradition. We should note, however, that despite his qualified use of physical interpretations, Usener also emphasized that from a certain point onwards, personal gods developed a capacity for virtually limitless expansion that had a dynamic of its own. Thus he called attention to the fact that not only Zeus, but also gods like Aphrodite or Hekate, could be portrayed in literature as omnipotent.⁴⁴ As Diels observed, the development of divine conceptions which Usener put forward in the *Götternamen* was, therefore, from *Augenblicksgötter* to *Söndergötter*, ultimately to universal gods.⁴⁵

For Usener, the most important implication of the theory that *Söndergötter* formed the basis of personal gods was that it refuted

⁴¹ Usener (1896), p. 177. Cf. 'Aus dem halbtod des schlafs erweckt uns das licht des tages zum leben... Nach den gefahren und gespenstischen schrecknissen der nacht wirkt das aufgehende licht erlösend und rettend, befreiend und reinigend.' Usener (1896), p. 178.

⁴² H. Usener, Review of A. Bouché-Leclercq's *L'Astrologie Grecque* (1899), *Kleine Schriften*, vol. III (Leipzig/Berlin: Teubner, 1914), pp. 372–6 at p. 373.

⁴³ '... [ist] denen, welche zu den göttern Griechenlands zurückkehrten wie Julianus oder sich zurückräumten wie Hölderlin, die himmlische lichtquelle der wendepunkt gewesen.' Usener (1896), p. 184.

⁴⁴ Usener (1896), pp. 338–9. On the issue of the omnipotence of the Greek gods, see ch. V, 'God. The Question of Divine Omnipotence' Versnel (2011), pp. 379–438.

⁴⁵ Diels to Usener, 3 March 1896, n. 319, in D. Ehlers, *Diels, Usener, Zeller. Briefwechsel*, vol. I (Berlin: Akademie, 1992), p. 510.

theories of Indo-European *Urmonotheismus*.⁴⁶ Usener confessed that earlier in his career, he had been in favour of *Urmonotheismus*. However, his acquaintance with the evidence on the worship of *Augenblicksgötter* in Lithuanian polytheism made it necessary to reconsider his views. Thus, after a 'long sleepless night', he came to the conclusion that monotheism was the result of progress in religious thought.⁴⁷ In fact, the pattern of development in the conception of the gods he set out in the *Götternamen* amounts to one of the most forceful attacks on *Urmonotheismus* to appear in nineteenth-century scholarship. Like Preller almost four decades before him, Usener criticized in particular two of the most eminent advocates of *Urmonotheismus* in the course of the nineteenth century: first, despite his profound appreciation, his teacher, Welcker, the champion of the theory of Zeus Kronion, which Usener dismissed as untenable; and second, Schelling, the philosopher who with his speculative views dared enter a domain which, for Usener, should be the exclusive preserve of philologists.⁴⁸ The fact that, in the last years of the nineteenth century, Usener regarded the question of *Urmonotheismus* as the crucial question in the history of religion highlights its persisting significance for German scholarship.

Usener, however, went further than arguing against *Urmonotheismus*. He maintained that the monotheistic tendency that had been observable in Greek religion since the time of Xenophanes had been incapable of leading to a strict monotheism. In his pithy expression, 'Each god kept the other in check.'⁴⁹ This precarious balance started to be subverted only at the Hellenistic period with the spread of 'Oriental' cults. Usener suggested that the religious syncretism they gave rise to prepared the ground for the faith in one god.⁵⁰ He underscored, nevertheless, that the revelation of pure monotheism only came to the Greco-Roman world with Christianity.⁵¹ Usener placed the greatest emphasis on the point that Christian monotheism

⁴⁶ Usener (1896), pp. 273ff.

⁴⁷ Usener (1896), pp. 274, 276, Gruppe (1921), p. 229. 'Die berühmte Anekdote sagt, nach einer durchwachten Nacht habe Usener mitten im Sommersemester 1873 seine Vorlesung mit dem Bekenntnis begonnen, bisher einer ganz verkehrten Auffassung vom Gang der menschheitlichen Religionsgeschichte gefolgt zu sein.' R. Kany, *Mnemosyne als Programm. Geschichte, Erinnerung und die Andacht zum Unbedeutenden im Werk von Usener, Warburg und Benjamin* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1987), p. 91.

⁴⁸ Usener (1896), pp. 25–7, 273–4.

⁴⁹ Usener (1896), p. 348.

⁵⁰ Usener (1896), p. 340.

⁵¹ Usener (1896), p. 348.

became corrupted as a consequence of its encounter with Greco-Roman polytheism. In his view, it had not been possible for the early Church to assimilate the pagan masses of the Roman Empire without being affected. Indeed, he claimed that 'what became of the original Christianity, namely the Christian Church, is a compromise between the heathen and the Christian'.⁵² Usener stressed that such aspects of Christianity as the dogma of the Trinity, the worship of Mary, or the worship of saints marked a deviation from the strict monotheism of the original Christian revelation, which he attributed to the enduring strengths of ancient polytheistic beliefs.⁵³ In his eyes, it was incumbent upon historians of the religions of antiquity to identify and help cleanse 'antiquated' elements in the modern religious conscience.⁵⁴ Bremmer has drawn attention to two pieces of evidence that shed light on Usener's agenda. First, the testimony of Franz Overbeck (1837–1905). Overbeck reports that Usener once told him that his main interest in pursuing a comparative study of religion had been 'to prove its paganism to the Roman Catholic Church'.⁵⁵ We should note that the ideas that Usener set out in the *Götternamen* had been germinating over a long period of time, during which the German Empire had been experiencing the convulsions of the *Kulturkampf* between the state and the Catholic Church. The second piece of evidence is a letter written by Usener in 1902. In that letter, Usener stated that he had been guided in his studies of the ancient church by a 'strictly Protestant spirit' and expressed the hope that through that spirit, 'the purification and elucidation of the life of our church' would be achieved.⁵⁶ In this respect, there is a parallel between the work of Usener and the emergence of a historically orientated approach in German theology in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The leading theologian and church historian Adolf Harnack (1851–1930), for example, argued that historical research could purify dogma and help distinguish between the core of Christianity and superficial accretions.⁵⁷ In addition, the 1890s saw

⁵² Usener (1904), pp. 46–7.

⁵³ Usener (1896), pp. 348–9.

⁵⁴ Usener (1904), p. 65. Campbell provides a parallel in Britain: 'the sympathetic study of antiquity on critical lines may help not only to invigorate but, what is not less important, also to purify traditional Christianity.' Campbell (1898), p. 382.

⁵⁵ F. Overbeck, *Christentum und Kultur* (Basel: Benno Schwabe and Co., 1919), pp. 195–6 quoted in Bremmer (1990), p. 469.

⁵⁶ Bremmer (1990), pp. 469–70, cf. Schlesier (1994), p. 199, Leege (2011), pp. 241–2.

⁵⁷ Nipperdey (1988), p. 71.

the formation of the 'Religionsgeschichtliche Schule' at Göttingen, a group consisting of theologians such as Albert Eichhorn (1856–1926) and Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932), who focused on the study of early Christianity in its historical context and on the assessment of influences from late Judaism, the religion of Babylon, and the religions of the Greco-Roman world.⁵⁸ Usener has been claimed as one of the forerunners of this theological school.⁵⁹

It is interesting to note against this background that, according to Usener, the worship of saints suggested a polytheistic way of thinking that was essentially similar to that underlying the worship of the *Sondergötter*.⁶⁰ Time and again, Usener stressed that the examination of the practices of the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox Church provided insights into the religions of antiquity.⁶¹ As professor at Bonn, Usener had the opportunity to observe practising Catholics closely. This invites the suggestion that his (mis)understanding of the role of Christian saints as involving tightly defined authority over specific departments may have played a part in his formulation of the theory that *Sondergötter* had constituted early, rudimentary conceptions of the divine in ancient polytheisms. As in the case of Voss or Max Müller, Usener's theory of the *Sondergötter* highlights how the study of the religions of antiquity could be drawn into contemporary confessional polemics.

As has been mentioned, Usener's theory of *Sondergötter* was the opposite of Curtius' theory of universal gods. It is tempting to see the former as a reaction to the latter. However, although, as we saw, Usener criticized theories of *Urmonotheismus* in the *Götternamen*, he did not engage specifically with Curtius'. Be that as it may, these two students of Welcker represent two polar extremes in the debate in

⁵⁸ Nipperdey (1988), p. 74, Burkert (1996), pp. 27–31, G. Lüdemann and M. Schröder, *Die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule in Göttingen. Eine Dokumentation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1987), p. 7.

⁵⁹ Kany (1987), pp. 71–2.

⁶⁰ 'Gerade so wie ehemals in den gebetformularen der *pontifices* die ganze reihe der göttlichen einzelbegriffe, in welche sich die dem göttlichen schutz empfohlene handlung zerlegen liess, vor den betenden vorüberzog, so suchte man nun in jenen heiligen die vertreter aller der einzelbedürfnisse, welche den gläubigen zum gebete trieben.' Usener (1896), p. 116. Cf. 'In der tat ist ein grosser theil der christlichen heiligen in die stelle alter indigitamentengötter eingetreten.' Usener (1896), p. 116. Cf. Wessels (2003), p. 67. Kern would also compare emphatically Catholic Saints to *Sondergötter*: Kern (1926), p. 113.

⁶¹ E.g. Usener (1904), pp. 47, 63.

nineteenth-century German classical scholarship over *Urmonotheismus*, one from a historical-archaeological, the other from a philological perspective: Curtius piously argued for *Urmonotheismus* and for monotheistic elements in polytheism, while Usener subversively argued for *Urpolytheismus* and for polytheistic elements in monotheism. Continuing in a tradition that through K.O. Müller reached back to the leading figure of German romantic theology, Schleiermacher, Curtius viewed religion as having its roots in the emotions of the human heart. Accordingly, as we saw, he argued that each Olympian god had originally been a universal god in accordance with human emotional needs and that *Particulargottheiten* were a late phenomenon. For Usener, on the other hand, *Particulargottheiten* constituted early conceptions of the divine, and their emergence had been due to the erroneous conclusions of the human mind, while universal gods were late developments. Lastly, Curtius suggested that memories of *Urmonotheismus* were preserved in Greek religion down to the time of Paul, who drew on them in his effort to spread Christianity in Greece, while Usener laid stress on polytheistic residues in Christianity.

Despite the weight of its author's name, the *Götternamen* did not have an immediate major impact on the study of Greek religion.⁶² There were several contributing factors.⁶³ The closest disciple of Usener, A. Dieterich, died prematurely in 1908, shortly after Usener's own death. Moreover, having been published late in Usener's career, the *Götternamen* appeared obsolete.⁶⁴ Dieterich recounted that criticism was voiced among philologists that the book had appeared twenty years too late, with the result that the etymologies proposed by Usener were outdated by progress in linguistics.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the reliability of the core evidence underlying the *Götternamen* was called into question. In his essay 'Echte und falsche "Sondergötter" in der römischen Religion' (1904), Wissowa argued that rather than offering insight into early Roman conceptions of the divine, 'the vast majority of Varro's gods first became Sondergötter through Varro's efforts to assign every god with a specific function and significance for human beings, and his desire to find these divine

⁶² On the reception of the *Götternamen* see Kany (1987), pp. 97–113.

⁶³ Bremmer (1990), p. 473.

⁶⁴ Deubner (1908), p. 68.

⁶⁵ Dieterich (1911), p. 358.

functions in a system that was as closed and complete as possible'.⁶⁶ In addition, Farnell devoted an article to a review of the *Götternamen* with a focus on its relevance to Greek religion. Farnell argued that Greek religion offered scarce evidence for the worship of *Sondergötter* in the sense of ancient impersonal deities as postulated by Usener. Thus he maintained that, unlike the impersonal deities of the *Indigitamenta*, in Greek religion, figures bearing names indicating a specific function like, for example, Δειπνεύς or Κεράων, tended to be conceived as persons, and were to be seen as late creations rather than deriving from the distant past of Greek religion.⁶⁷

What is more, the *Götternamen* met with a cold reception from Wilamowitz. Usener's relationship with his most illustrious student was uneasy and, after Usener's death, Wilamowitz's influence on German classical scholarship contributed to the waning of Usener's.⁶⁸ Wilamowitz's distaste for his teacher's approach to the study of Greek religion is visible both in his private and in his public writings. He criticized Usener for overestimating the role of reason in religion. In a letter to his teacher, Wilamowitz cited Goethe: 'Feeling is everything; names are but sound and smoke', and he reiterated in *Der Glaube der Hellenen*: 'Is Faust wrong then when he says "Feeling is everything"? No one prays to a concept.'⁶⁹ In addition, Wilamowitz was dismissive of Usener's recourse to physical interpretations. In his eyes, these

⁶⁶ Wissowa (1904), pp. 320–1. Cf. Momigliano (1982), p. 263. For a current discussion of *Sondergötter* in Roman religion, see J. Scheid and J. Svenbro, 'Useners Beitrag zur Religionsgeschichte. Die *Götternamen*', in Espagne/Rabault-Feuerhahn (2011), pp. 17–23 at pp. 21–2.

⁶⁷ L.R. Farnell, 'The Place of the "Sonder-Götter" in Greek Polytheism', in H. Balfour and others (eds.), *Anthropological Essays Presented to Eduard Burnett Tylor* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907c), pp. 81–100 at p. 94.

⁶⁸ Bremmer (1990), pp. 467, 473. Momigliano (1982), pp. 253–4.

⁶⁹ Cited in H.-J. Mette, 'Nekrolog einer Epoche: Hermann Usener und seine Schule. Ein wirkungsgeschichtlicher Rückblick auf die Jahre 1856–1979', *Lustrum* 22, 1979–80, pp. 5–106 at p. 80; Wilamowitz (1931), p. 11. Cf. A. Henrichs, 'Der Glaube der Hellenen: Religionsgeschichte als Glaubensbekenntnis und Kulturkritik', in W.M. Calder III, H. Flashar, and Th. Lindken (eds.), *Wilamowitz nach 50 Jahren* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), pp. 263–305 at p. 289 and pp. 281–3, Bremmer (1990), p. 471. As Kern observes, one may compare A. Milchhoefer's review of the *Götternamen* which also concluded with a citation from Goethe: 'Ich kann das Wort so hoch unmöglich schätzen': *Berliner Philologische Wochenschrift* 40, 1896, pp. 1251–65 at p. 1265 cited in Kern (1938), p. 299.

suggested a theological—as opposed to a genuinely religious—approach in the tradition of the Orphics. He revealingly stated (and it was not meant as a compliment): ‘I consider Usener’s mythology to be thoroughly Orphic.’⁷⁰

Nevertheless, in the longer term, Usener’s views exercised a very broadly felt influence—both through the *Götternamen* and his other writings on ‘pagan’ elements in Christianity, as well as through the *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*.⁷¹ In particular, as regards the *Götternamen*, its evolutionary model was strongly criticized, but from the time of its appearance to the present day, it has also been widely recognized that Usener’s *Augenblicks*- and *Sondergötter* are useful categories of analysis for the study of polytheisms.⁷² Moreover, the questions that Usener sought to address regarding the gods and their names continue to attract interest in the current study of Greek

⁷⁰ Wilamowitz (1895a), p. xiii. As we shall see, Wilamowitz dismissed what he termed ancient and modern *Physikothologie*. On his distaste for the Orphics, see Henrichs (1985), pp. 304–5.

⁷¹ The collection of essays in Espagne/Rabault-Feuerhahn (2011) explores Usener’s influence on diverse disciplines and scholars. On the *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, see Espagne (2011b), pp. 39–40. On Usener’s influence see further Mette (1979/80), pp. 99–100. In the chapter on ‘»Arbeiter in Useners Weinberg«: Anthropologie und antike Religionsgeschichte in Deutschland nach dem ersten Weltkrieg’ in *Kulte, Mythen und Gelehrte*, Schlesier examines the impact of Usener’s work on philology, art history, theology and philosophy in twentieth-century Germany: Schlesier (1994), pp. 193–241. Wessels investigates the influence of Usener on A. Dieterich, L. Radermacher, A. Warburg, and W.F. Otto in Wessels (2003). On Usener’s influence on Otto, see further Leege (2011). Among those who felt Usener’s influence was also Cumont: Bremmer (1990), p. 467, Bonnet I (2005), pp. 99, 106.

⁷² So Diels: ‘so sehe ich Deine wundervolle Analyse der Götterwelt: Augenblicksgötter, Sondergötter, Universalgötter für eine ganz außerordentlich wertvolle Bereicherung unseres mythologischen oder vielmehr religionsgeschichtlichen Wissens an’, cited in Ehlers I (1992), p. 510. For Gernet, ‘si la formule de Usener est un peu étroite qui définit les «dieux» les plus antiques comme dieux spéciaux ou momentanés (*Sondergötter* et *Augenblicksgötter*), il reste vrai que toute divinité mineure se fait reconnaître dans une sphère déterminée, ou par une activité particulière, ou à certains moments de la durée’: L. Gernet and A. Boulanger, *Le Génie Grec Dans la Religion* (Paris: La Renaissance du Livre, 1932), p. 248. On Gernet’s interest in Usener, see J.N. Bremmer, ‘Hermann Usener between British Anthropology, Dutch History and French Sociology’, in Espagne/Rabault-Feuerhahn (2011), pp. 77–87 at pp. 86–7. On the usefulness of the concepts of *Augenblicks*- and *Sondergötter*, see J. Scheid and J. Svenbro, ‘Les *Götternamen* de Hermann Usener: une Grande Théogonie’, in Belayche (2005), pp. 93–103 at pp. 98, 102, and Scheid/Svenbro (2011). On the impact of the *Götternamen* on the study of Roman and even Chinese polytheism, see Bremmer (1990), p. 471.

religion.⁷³ At once attesting to how the study of the religions of antiquity in late nineteenth-century Germany was informed by confessional polemics and an insightful anatomy of ancient polytheisms, Usener's *Götternamen* is one of the most stimulating works of nineteenth-century classical scholarship.⁷⁴

⁷³ P. Brulé, 'Comment Dire le Divin?', in Belayche (2005), pp. 5–11 at p. 5.

⁷⁴ Cf. Bremmer (1990), p. 471.

British Responses

I. THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the rise of folklore studies and anthropology, the work of the Semitic scholar William Robertson Smith (1846–94), as well as the archaeological discoveries of the Minoan and Mycenaean culture, which ‘added a millennium to the history of the religions of Greece’,¹ created a new context for the study of Greek religion. Looking back at this period Harrison famously stated: ‘We Hellenists were, in truth, at that time a “people who sat in darkness”, but we were soon to see a great light, two great lights—archaeology, anthropology.’² Anthropology provided a more effective alternative than the historical-critical tradition to Indo-European Comparative Mythology and to philology more broadly as a ‘scientific’ approach to the study of ancient religion.³ Although important anthropological works appeared in other countries, the main impetus to anthropological studies during this time came from Britain.⁴ In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the

¹ M.P. Nilsson, ‘Second Letter to Professor Nock on the Positive Gains in the Science of Greek Religion’, *The Harvard Theological Review* 44 (4), 1951, pp. 143–51 at p. 147. Cf. ‘Our knowledge of this subject [Greek religion] has been put on a new basis by researches into the beliefs of pre-Dorian Greece and Minoan Crete.’ A.D. Nock, ‘Greek Religion’, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. II (London, 1926, thirteenth edition), pp. 289–90 at p. 289.

² J.E. Harrison, *Reminiscences of a Student’s Life* (London: Hogarth, 1925), pp. 82–3. Cf. Turner (1981), p. 116.

³ Cf. Burrow (1967), p. 203.

⁴ As was acknowledged in the German-speaking world: ‘Auf dem Gebiete der Anthropologie steht England an der Spitze’ Bloch (1905), p. 444. Indicative of the interest in Frazerian anthropology in Germany is that Deubner, despite having objections to Frazer’s approach, stated that ‘niemand, der auf diesem Gebiete arbeitet,

increasing influx of information from the far corners of the British Empire, from North America to Africa to Australia, resulted in an accumulation of anthropological material on an unprecedented scale. The expanded multivolume editions of *The Golden Bough* are classic examples of the monumental anthropology of the period. In addition, Darwinism encouraged the 'scientific' reconstruction of the early history of humankind.⁵ In part due to its influence, the postulation of clearly distinguishable stages in human history and the formulation of universally valid scientific laws governing the evolution of the human mind and of religion played a prominent part in nineteenth-century anthropology.

In this chapter I examine the treatment of the Greek gods during this new period in the history of the discipline in the work of Lang, Farnell and Harrison. By way of background, I look briefly at the work of major contemporary anthropologists and folklorists such as Tylor, Mannhardt and Frazer, as well as of Robertson Smith.⁶

E.B. Tylor (1832–1917) is widely regarded as one of the founding fathers of British anthropology.⁷ In *Primitive Culture* (1871) Tylor undertook to study the origins and development of human culture, treating 'mankind as homogeneous in nature, though placed in different grades of civilization'.⁸ He argued that human culture had progressed gradually from a 'primitive' stage of animism, in which man had conceived of external objects as beings endowed with souls on the analogy of human souls that was in some respects comparable to the state of modern 'primitive' peoples.⁹ The theory that the origins

an den reichen Schätzen vorbeigehen darf, die Frazer in dieser ungeheuren Rüstkammer mit titanischem Fleiße zusammengebracht und zu bequemer Benutzung ausgebreitet hat.' L. Deubner, 'Griechische und römische Religion 1911–1914', *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 20, 1920–21, pp. 135–204, 411–41 at p. 439. For a recent examination of the history of British anthropology see E. Sera-Shriar, *The Making of British Anthropology, 1813–1871* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013).

⁵ As Mannhardt observed, 'unter dem Einflusse des Darwinismus die Urgeschichte unseres Geschlechtes gradezu in den Vordergrund des wissenschaftlichen Interesses gerückt ist.' Mannhardt (1877), p. xxiii.

⁶ For a recent discussion of British students of religion in the period including Tylor, Frazer, Lang, Robertson Smith and Harrison see Wheeler-Barclay (2010). On Mannhardt, Tylor, Frazer, Robertson Smith and Harrison see further Kippenberg (2002).

⁷ E.J. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion. A History* (London: Duckworth, 1975), p. 53, Sera-Shriar (2013), p. 153.

⁸ E.B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. I (London: Murray, 1871), pp. 6–7.

⁹ Tylor I (1871), pp. 377–453.

of humankind had been 'primitive' was exposed to attacks from the Church: 'It has happened to me,' Tylor stated, 'more than once to be assured from the pulpit that the theories of ethnologists who consider man to have risen from a low original condition are delusive fancies, it being revealed truth that man was originally in a high condition.'¹⁰ Tylor emphasized that 'in investigating the problem of early civilization, the claim to ground scientific opinion upon a basis of revelation is in itself objectionable'.¹¹ Challenging Christian and Christianizing theories of *Urmonotheismus* and its degeneration, several anthropological writers sought to document the evolution of humankind, including its religious conceptions, from the 'primitive' to the civilized state.¹² Tylor suggested that the earlier stages of civilization could be reconstructed through the study of 'survivals', which he defined as 'processes, customs, opinions, and so forth, which have been carried on by force of habit into a new state of society different from that in which they had their original home, and they thus remain as proofs and examples of an older condition of culture out of which a newer has been evolved'.¹³ In *Primitive Culture* Tylor did not examine at length, although he touched upon, the case of Greece. He did assume that, like other peoples, the Greeks had had a 'primitive' past. Moreover, he argued for the survival of 'beliefs and rites of a lower barbaric culture' among the Greeks. Thus he maintained that 'the classic Greeks had inherited from their barbaric ancestors a doctrine of the universe essentially similar to that of the North American Indian, the West African and the Siberian'.¹⁴ As we shall see, the implications of Tylor's views for Greek religion were worked out at greater length by Lang.

The Danzig librarian Wilhelm Mannhardt (1831–80) was one of the pioneers of the study of European folklore. Mannhardt had started his career as an advocate of Indo-European Comparative Mythology, his *Germanische Mythen* (1858) consisting in a comparative study of Germanic and Vedic myths and deities. However, as we

¹⁰ Tylor I (1871), p. 32.

¹¹ Tylor I (1871), p. 33.

¹² Schmidt (1987), pp. 42–5. Cf. Assmann (1993), p. 5. Kippenberg (2002), pp. 52–3. It is worth noting that more than a decade before Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, the leading German anthropologist, Th. Waitz (1821–64), had also argued for *Urpolytheismus*: 'Die ursprüngliche Gestalt der Religion ein roher systemloser Polytheismus ist': Th. Waitz, *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, vol. I (Leipzig: Fleischer, 1859), p. 457, cited in E. Lehmann (1925), p. 13.

¹³ Tylor I (1871), p. 15.

¹⁴ Tylor II (1871), pp. 188, 193.

saw, in *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte* (1877) he criticized the principles of Indo-European Comparative Mythology. He there argued that mythology was more complex than language and hence could not be studied satisfactorily on the model of Comparative Linguistics and dismissed the findings of Comparative Mythologists as mistaken or premature.¹⁵ In *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte* Mannhardt maintained that, alongside the highly developed literary forms of the religions and mythologies of antiquity, there existed a 'lower' *Volksmythologie* with similarities to the popular traditions of the peasants of Northern Europe. In an example of the contrast between the older physical interpretations and the new ones from folklore studies, Mannhardt suggested that Demeter was not to be seen as a cloud- or moon- or sun-goddess and so forth, but rather as the *Kornmutter*.¹⁶ He likewise asserted that figures such as the Dryads, the Centaurs, the Cyclopes or the Satyrs were not to be understood as personifications of natural phenomena as held by advocates of physical interpretations, but rather as similar to the mountain- and forest-spirits of modern European folklore, which, in his view, were demons of vegetation growth.¹⁷ In addition, Mannhardt suggested that ancient festivals such as those of Adonis, Attis, or Korymbos were comparable to the Maypole processions of modern Europe and that their goal was to promote vegetation.¹⁸

Mannhardt's work provides an important background to the writings of the most eminent representative of British anthropology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, J.G. Frazer (1854–1941).¹⁹ Ostensibly an inquiry into the cult of Diana at Nemi Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (first edition, 1890) amounted to a comparative study of the rites and beliefs of early cultures that drew on anthropological data on a large scale.²⁰ Following Mannhardt, Frazer held that the customs of modern peasants shed light on the rites of ancient religions and that these tended to aim at the promotion of

¹⁵ Mannhardt (1877), pp. xvii–xviii, xx.

¹⁶ H. Patzig (ed.), *Mythologische Forschungen aus dem Nachlasse von Wilhelm Mannhardt* (Strassburg/London: Trubner, 1884), pp. 280, 294.

¹⁷ Mannhardt (1877), pp. 39ff., 200.

¹⁸ Mannhardt (1877), pp. 296ff. Graf notes that 'Mannhardt was the first to explain Greek rituals on the basis of the rural customs of northern Europe'. Graf (1993), p. 26.

¹⁹ J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough. A Study in Comparative Religion*, vol. I (London: Macmillan, 1890), pp. ix–x, Kippenberg (2002), p. 81.

²⁰ Turner (1981), p. 119.

vegetation.²¹ Frazer placed emphasis on the notion of tree- and vegetation-spirits and deities whose death and resurrection mirrored the cycle of nature and the diminution and growth of vegetation.²² Thus he suggested that 'Under the names of Osiris, Adonis, Thammuz, Attis, and Dionysus, the Egyptians, Syrians, Babylonians, Phrygians, and Greeks represented the decay and revival of vegetation with rites, which as the ancient themselves recognised, were substantially the same, and which find their parallels in the spring and midsummer customs of our European peasantry'.²³ Drawing on Mannhardt he argued, for example, that Demeter was the Corn-mother and that her daughter, Persephone personified the corn.²⁴

The association of Greek religion with agriculture and vegetation was not in itself new.²⁵ We saw, for example, how eighteenth-century writers like Dupuis had pointed to the role of vegetation and, more broadly, of fertility. These aspects were not overlooked either by nineteenth-century scholars in the physical tradition or by scholars such as H.D. Müller. The work of Mannhardt and Frazer, however, was thought to have convincingly demonstrated the connection of a great number of Greek rituals and myths with vegetation as it drew on a vast amount of comparative data. Moreover, it contributed such concepts as 'Corn-demon' and 'Vegetation god' to the theoretical arsenal of the student of Greek religion,²⁶ which would eventually replace the elemental gods of earlier scholarship as the chief model of interpretation of the Greek gods.²⁷ As Graf observes, while advocates of physical interpretations had 'sought to reduce myth to a particular natural phenomenon, Frazer's school saw nature in its relation to man *qua* farmer, whose main concern was the fertility of his crops'.²⁸ This new model would remain highly influential in the study of Greek religion to the time of Nilsson.²⁹ We have seen how the physical approach resonated with nineteenth-century romantic sensibility for

²¹ Frazer argued, for example, that 'the archaic forms of tree-worship disclosed by the spring and midsummer festivals of our peasants were practised by the Greeks and Romans in prehistoric times': Frazer I (1890), p. 105. Cf. Graf (1993), p. 28.

²² Frazer I (1890), p. 248.

²³ Frazer I (1890), pp. 278–9.

²⁴ Frazer I (1890), pp. 330–1. Cf. Turner (1981), p. 120. Nilsson, who drew heavily on the work of Mannhardt and Frazer, also regarded Demeter as the Corn-mother: Nilsson (1925), p. 108.

²⁵ Graf (1993), p. 26.

²⁶ Cf. Turner (1981), p. 120, Burkert (2011), p. 12.

²⁷ Cf. Nilsson (1941), pp. 5–6.

²⁸ Graf (1993), p. 29. Cf. Burkert (1980), p. 169.

²⁹ Graf (2003), p. 6.

nature. Graf suggests that part of the appeal of the Frazerian approach likewise derived from the 'nostalgia and idealization of the primeval rural life' at a time of industrialization and urbanization.³⁰ We may note that in the writings of anthropological scholars religions associated with agriculture did not necessarily have the negative connotations they had had in previous generations of scholarship—as, for instance, at the time of K.O. Müller. Farnell offers an example of an ambivalent attitude towards 'vegetation ritual': 'We have been made familiar in our generation, especially by the writings of Mannhardt and Sir James Frazer, with a widespread vegetation-ritual that goes back to the beginnings of the culture of the tilth and the woodland . . . Much of it was uncouth and repulsive; but that which was associated with the home-bringing of the corn or the vintage was capable of forms of worship not without grace and beauty.'³¹

At the same time that anthropology was rising in Britain, W.R. Smith's *The Religion of the Semites* (1889) advanced a hugely influential view of ancient religions which placed emphasis on their social dimension and on ritual.³² Like Fontenelle and W. von Humboldt, but much more influentially, Robertson Smith argued that, in contrast to modern religions, the religions of the ancient world had 'for the most part no creed' and 'consisted entirely of institutions and practices'.³³ Instead of creed or dogma in antiquity there was mythology, which, however, 'was no essential part of ancient religion, for it had no sacred sanction and no binding force on the worshippers'.³⁴ Moreover, in cases when myths provided explanations of rituals, virtually always the myth derived from ritual rather than vice versa. Accordingly, Robertson Smith stressed that 'in the study of ancient religions we must begin, not with myth, but with ritual and traditional usage'.³⁵ In his opinion, 'the origin and meaning of sacrifice constitute

³⁰ Graf (2003), p. 8. Cf. Graf (1993), p. 29.

³¹ Farnell (1925), p. 71. Cf. 'We look back often yearningly to the freedom, freshness, and simplicity of the nomadic pastoral life.' Farnell (1925), p. 110.

³² W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), p. 35, Burkert (1980), p. 173.

³³ W.R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites. First Series. The Fundamental Institutions* (Edinburgh: Black, 1889), p. 18. Cf. Turner (1981), p. 122.

³⁴ Smith (1889), p. 19.

³⁵ Smith (1889), p. 20. Cf. R. Alun Jones, 'Robertson Smith and James Frazer on Religion. Two Traditions in British Social Anthropology', in G.W. Stocking Jr. (ed.), *Functionalism Historicized* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), pp. 31–58 at p. 37.

the central problem of ancient religion.³⁶ Particularly influential has been his suggestion that in the case of 'extraordinary' or 'mystical' sacrifices, 'the significance of the rite lies in an exceptional act of communion with the godhead, by participation in holy flesh which is ordinarily forbidden to man'.³⁷

Robertson Smith drew a further contrast between ancient and modern religions, maintaining that the former were 'part of the citizen's public life' and not 'a matter of individual conviction' like the latter.³⁸ He argued that in antiquity the area of private religion was occupied by magic. Furthermore, he stressed that the objective of the religions of antiquity did not consist in 'the saving of souls', but rather in 'the preservation and welfare of society'. In view of this social aspect, Robertson Smith asserted that 'in the study of Semitic religion, we must not begin by asking what was told about the gods, but what the working religious institutions were, and how they shaped the lives of the worshippers'.³⁹ According to Robertson Smith, 'From the antique point of view... the question what the gods are in themselves is not a religious but a speculative one'.⁴⁰ The approach advocated by anthropological writers and Robertson Smith contributed to a drastic rethinking about what should be the chief objects of study for the scholars of Greek religion as well: the previous focus on the gods or on belief started to cede ground to the focus on rituals and to an interest in the social functions of religion.⁴¹ Wilamowitz fought a losing battle when he protested: 'what we investigate about ritual, temple-worship and sacrifice, festival customs and invocations, all that is not yet religion. This is located in the heart'.⁴²

³⁶ Smith (1889), p. 28. Cf. Jones (1984), p. 47.

³⁷ Smith (1889), p. 294. Cf. Jones (1984), p. 48.

³⁸ Smith (1889), p. 22. Cf. Kippenberg (2002), pp. 78–80.

³⁹ Smith (1889), p. 23. Cf. Jones (1984), p. 38. ⁴⁰ Smith (1889), p. 24.

⁴¹ Henrichs (1987), pp. 13–14, Henrichs (2010), pp. 24–5.

⁴² Wilamowitz (1921), p. 47. Cf. 'Wir rechnen oft zu wenig damit, daß die Religion mit dem Kultus, seinen Formen und Formeln nicht erschöpft ist, daß sie sich mit diesen gar nicht einmal zu decken braucht.' Wilamowitz (1921), p. 46. One may compare the view of the leading German student of Greek ritual, P. Stengel (1851–1929), in the very first page of his *Die griechischen Kultusaltertümer*: 'Gottesdienst und alle Formen und Arten seiner Bethätigung sind ohne Leben und ohne Seele, vergegenwärtigt man sich nicht jeden Augenblick auch den Glauben und das Empfinden des Volkes, das sie geschaffen und geübt hat.' P. Stengel, *Die griechischen Kultusaltertümer* (Munich: Beck, 1890), p. 3.

II. BRIDGING ANTHROPOLOGY WITH THE STUDY OF GREEK RELIGION: ANDREW LANG (1844–1912)

A couple of years before the end of the nineteenth century, an envious Robert Brown observed that 'at the present time there are few British literateurs more widely known than Mr. Andrew Lang. The field of his activity is so large and his energy is so untiring, that he is almost always in evidence.'⁴³ The study of early religion was one of Lang's many interests.

Andrew Lang (1844–1912) was born in Selkirk, Scotland. He came from a family of 'the true Protestant religion'.⁴⁴ As a boy he attended the local grammar school and the Edinburgh Academy. In the 1860s, he studied at the Universities of St. Andrews, Glasgow and Oxford. From 1868 to 1875, he held a fellowship at Merton College, Oxford after which he moved to London. He there embarked on a career in journalism, literary writing and classical and religious studies and translations.⁴⁵ Lang initially popularized the principles of Tylorian anthropology.⁴⁶ He was one of the first to apply them systematically in the study of Greek religion and, conversely, one of the first in Britain to subject physical interpretations to sustained criticism.⁴⁷ As a result, Lang became one of the principal anthropological interlocutors of Farnell and Harrison. In the light of the fact that his *Custom and Myth* appeared in 1884, the same year that Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon* was begun, it might be tempting to regard these two works as exemplifying the two competing approaches then current in each country, anthropology in Britain versus physical interpretation in Germany. Indeed, this is how Lang and Farnell sought to portray the state of affairs in the contemporary study of Greek religion. However, as we saw, physical interpretations had been coming under heavy

⁴³ Brown (1898), p. 23. Cf. E. De Selms Langstaff, *Andrew Lang* (Boston: Twayne, 1978), p. 31.

⁴⁴ Stated of Lang's grandfather, also named Andrew Lang: R.L. Green, *Andrew Lang. A Critical Biography* (Leicester: Ward, 1946), p. 4.

⁴⁵ For the biographical information on Lang I draw on Green (1946), De Selms Langstaff (1978).

⁴⁶ See A.P.L. de Cocq, *Andrew Lang, a Nineteenth Century Anthropologist* (Tilburg: Zwijssen, 1968), Dorson (1968), pp. 206–12, Turner (1981), pp. 117–19, Sharpe (1975), pp. 58–9.

⁴⁷ Cf. Turner (1981), p. 117.

criticism in Germany itself long before the emergence of Tylorian anthropology or the writings of Lang.

In his *Custom and Myth*, which he dedicated to Tylor, Lang set himself the task of comparing the 'seemingly meaningless customs or manners of civilised races with the similar customs and manners which exist among the uncivilised and still retain their meaning'.⁴⁸ His starting-point was Tylor's premise that 'similar conditions of mind produce similar practices, apart from identity of race, or borrowing of ideas and manners'.⁴⁹ Following Tylor, he postulated that the irrational elements in the customs of civilized nations, including those of Western Europe, were survivals from a period of 'savagery'. Lang opened his *Myth, Ritual and Religion* (1887) with the assertion that the interpretation of ancient mythology 'has become a subject of curious but almost disinterested inquiry' and that 'Christian conduct and faith are no longer affected by the answers to these questions which we may discover or invent'.⁵⁰ Yet, as we saw, a few years later Max Müller's Gifford lectures provoked a furious reaction among conservative Christian circles in Glasgow because of their perceived implications for Christianity. The fact that Lang felt it was necessary to so claim at the beginning of his book suggests that he was trying to minimize the alarming effect that anthropological inquiries might have on the pious.⁵¹

To gain legitimacy for the anthropological approach Lang sought to show that, on the one hand, it had actually a long history, and, on the other hand, that it was in line with the latest scientific development, Darwinian evolution. Thus in an appendix under the revealing title 'Fontenelle's Forgotten Common Sense' he maintained that the assumption that certain practices derived from a 'savage' past, if not fully worked out, could already be encountered in pre-nineteenth-century comparative works on ancient and modern polytheisms such

⁴⁸ A. Lang, *Custom and Myth* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1884), p. 21.

⁴⁹ Lang (1884), pp. 21–2. Cf. Turner (1981), p. 118.

⁵⁰ A. Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, vol. I (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1887), p. 1.

⁵¹ We may note in this context that in a letter to his publisher before the publication of the first volume of *The Golden Bough* Frazer stated, 'The resemblance of many of the savage customs and ideas to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity is striking. But I make no reference to this parallelism, leaving my readers to draw their own conclusions, one way or the other.' Cited in Turner (1993), p. 342.

as Fontenelle's *De l'Origine des Fables*.⁵² In fact, he asserted: 'the followers of Mr. E.B. Taylor [*sic*], Mannhardt, Gaidoz, and the rest, do not seem to be aware that they are only repeating the notions of the nephew of Corneille.'⁵³ He also claimed, however, that 'the whole system is only an application to this particular province, mythology, of the method by which the development either of organisms or of human institutions is traced'.⁵⁴

The advocacy of the anthropological method brought Lang into collision with the 'German philologists', namely scholars like Welcker, Preller and Roscher and, above all, with Max Müller, the leading exponent of Indo-European Comparative Mythology in Britain.⁵⁵ As we have seen, there was a long tradition of criticism of the approaches of these scholars in Germany, which Lang was unaware of, or chose not to mention. At a first level, Lang was critical of the tendency of the 'philologists' to place emphasis on the etymological analysis of divine names. He argued that, in many cases, stories were originally anonymous and that they only gradually became associated with specific names.⁵⁶ Furthermore, he drew attention to the fact that, with few exceptions, there was no agreement among the 'experts' as to the meaning of the names of most Greek gods. In Lang's view, this indicated the inadequacy of etymological approaches.⁵⁷ We should note that the criticism of the value of etymological analysis may have been powerful against scholars in the tradition of Indo-European Comparative Mythology as practised by Max Müller, but not necessarily against scholars like Roscher, who, as we saw, relied heavily on other types of argument.

At a further level, Lang rejected the method of physical interpretation of the Greek gods favoured by 'philologists'. Although he conceded that certain Greek gods may have originally been personifications of natural elements, Lang argued that in the course of time

⁵² 'Fontenelle's Forgotten Common Sense' Appendix A in Lang II (1887), pp. 321–4. Cf. Lang I (1887), p. 34, Feldman/Richardson (1972), p. 7.

⁵³ Lang II (1887), p. 321.

⁵⁴ Lang I (1887), p. 37.

⁵⁵ On the debate between Lang and Max Müller see Dorson (1968), pp. 166–71, 208–12, van den Bosch (2002), pp. 520–1, Wheeler-Barclay (2010), pp. 115–18. Despite their attacks on German scholars, Lang's writings were positively reviewed in Germany, not least because of their criticism of the, according to Lang, 'German', physical interpretations: F. Back, 'Jahresbericht über die Mythologie aus den Jahren 1886–1890', *Jahresbericht über die Fortschritte der classischen Alterthumswissenschaft* 66, 1892, pp. 224–400 at p. 236.

⁵⁶ Lang (1884), pp. 4–5.

⁵⁷ Lang (1884), pp. 2–4.

the gods developed into complex personalities. In his view, they tended to shed their links with their elemental origins and attract features and myths from a variety of sources. Thus he emphasized that 'whatever Zeus was in his earliest origin, he had become, by the time we can study him in ritual, poem, or sacred chapter, a complex of qualities and attributes, spiritual, moral, elemental, animal and human'.⁵⁸ Similarly, Apollo may have originally been a sun-god, but he 'soon disengages himself from the sun, and appears as a deity chiefly remarkable for his moral and prophetic attributes'.⁵⁹ In addition, Lang sought to expose the implausibility of the attempt to trace back every aspect of the Greek gods to a single natural phenomenon or element. Taking the case of Athena as an example, he called attention to Welcker's portrayal of her as 'a feminine personification of the upper air, daughter of Zeus, the dweller in aether'. Lang claimed that, according to Welcker, Athena was called *glaukopis* because the sky in Attica 'is often likewise marvellously green', that the olive-tree was sacred to her because 'olive-oil gives light from a lamp, and light also comes from aether', and so forth.⁶⁰ If one turned away from such speculative associations and examined the factual evidence, one would have to recognize, according to Lang, that 'There is no proof that Athene was ever a nature-goddess at all, and if she was, there is nothing to show what was her department of nature'.⁶¹

By drawing attention to the wildest aspects of physical interpretations, Lang sought to advertise the superiority of the anthropological method. In his view, Greek mythology was neither to be seen as originating in descriptions of natural phenomena as held by scholars in the physical tradition, nor in stories about real historical individuals as Herbert Spencer had suggested in a short-lived revival of Euhemerism. Rather, like the mythologies of all peoples irrespective of language, it should be seen as the product of the imagination of

⁵⁸ Lang II (1887), p. 189.

⁵⁹ Lang II (1887), p. 208.

⁶⁰ Lang II (1887), p. 245. In both cases, Lang was being slightly unfair to Welcker. The point about the Attic sky occurs in the context of Welcker trying to explain how the word *glaukos* could be used at the same time in reference to the sea, the sky and the leaves of olive-trees. Moreover, in associating olive-trees with lamp light Welcker was drawing on Suidas. More importantly, Lang overlooked that Welcker himself actually opposed tracing back all aspects of Athena to her elemental *Grundbedeutung* (which he took for granted, nevertheless) and that he offered a largely ethical account of her: Welcker (1857), pp. 298ff., 303, 318.

⁶¹ Lang II (1887), p. 249.

their 'savage' ancestors⁶²—a view that, as we saw, was rejected with indignation by Max Müller. Lang did not confine himself to the claim that Greek mythology originated in a 'savage' past. In a passage that illustrates the challenge that anthropology posed to idealized views of Greece, he held that 'not only myths, but Greek life in general, and especially Greek ritual, teemed with surviving examples of institutions and of manners which are found everywhere among the most backward and barbarous races'.⁶³ As examples of practices surviving from a state of 'savagery' Lang referred to the worship of 'fetish stones' or human sacrifice.⁶⁴ As regards the latter, he cited Robertson Smith's theory that the human sacrifices to Zeus Lykaios in Arcadia originated in 'cannibal feasts of a Wolf tribe'.⁶⁵ In addition, Lang argued that the myths about the unions of gods in animal form with mortal women which certain Greek families claimed descent from, further pointed in the direction of a totemic past.⁶⁶ The differences between Lang's approach and that of scholars in the physical tradition in this respect are clearly visible in his account of Apollo Smintheus. In his essay 'Apollo and the Mouse', Lang called attention to the view of the Italian scholar Angelo de Gubernatis (1840–1913), author of *Zoological Mythology or the Legends of Animals* (1872), a work in the tradition of Indo-European Comparative Mythology, that 'the Pagan Sun-god crushes under his foot the Mouse of Night'.⁶⁷ By contrast, Lang drew on the thesis of Robertson Smith that mice totems had been common among the Semitic peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean to suggest that the cult of Apollo Smintheus had been superimposed some time 'long before Homer' on the totemic worship of mice.⁶⁸ He further suggested that Apollo's association with other animals like the wolf or the dolphin was likewise to be understood in the light of the totemic background of Greek religion.⁶⁹

Lang claimed that he was primarily interested in shedding light on the 'savage' origins of the Greek gods. However, in dismissing the physical interpretation of Greek myths and of the sacred animals of the Greek gods and substituting them with interpretations based on the premises of contemporary anthropology, his work had implications for

⁶² Lang (1884), pp. 24–5.

⁶³ Lang I (1887), pp. 257–8.

⁶⁴ Lang I (1887), pp. 273–5.

⁶⁵ Lang I (1887), p. 273.

⁶⁶ Lang (1884), pp. 263–4.

⁶⁷ Lang (1884), p. 117. On Gubernatis see Dorson (1968), pp. 181–2.

⁶⁸ Lang (1884), pp. 111, 118.

⁶⁹ Lang (1884), p. 118.

the way the gods of the historical period were to be viewed. When, for example, he suggested that the mythical representations of Zeus as a god endowed with the miraculous power of transformation into animal form and with the power of magic amounted to representations of a 'very savage person, with all the powers of the medicine man and all the passions of the barbarian',⁷⁰ he was making a point about the diachronic portrayal of Zeus in myth. Nevertheless, in a remarkable passage for a writer who stated that his purpose was to draw attention to the 'savage' elements in Greek civilization, Lang also asserted: 'There are moments when, as we study the legend of Zeus, we could almost pity a god who is by no means so black as he was painted.'⁷¹ If, in his eyes, Zeus appeared in certain myths to be on a par with 'savage' medicine-men, Lang suggested that Zeus, the arbiter of human fate as portrayed by Homer, represented a sublime conception of the divine.⁷²

Moreover, already in the 1887 edition of *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, but more strongly in the new edition of 1899, Lang suggested that 'Zeus may have begun as a kindly supreme being' and that later totemic and other myths 'accrued to his legend'.⁷³ This view is reminiscent of Welcker's theory of Zeus Kronion whom Lang otherwise sharply criticized. Lang's account of Zeus should be seen in the broader context of his views on 'Supreme Beings'. In *The Making of Religion* (1898), Lang stressed that Supreme Beings were observable in the religions of 'savages'. Tylor, for whom the concept of Supreme Being represented a relatively late stage in the religious development of humankind, attributed them to the influence of Christian missionaries. Taking issue with his former mentor, Lang argued that these Supreme Beings were not late products of Christian influence, but went back to a remote past. He thus vindicated early religion.⁷⁴ Father

⁷⁰ Lang II (1887), p. 172.

⁷¹ Lang II (1887), p. 188.

⁷² Lang II (1887), pp. 186–8. Lang's point on the two-sided portrayal of Zeus recalls both Welcker's account of Zeus and K.O. Müller's observations in his *Prolegomena*: 'Zeus: Offenbar hat der Dichter [Homer] eine doppelte Weise, diesen höchsten Gott anzufassen', 'Und so ergab sich jene wunderbare Mischung von Allmacht und Schwäche, Weisheit und Unkunde, welche in Homerischen Zeus Jedem auffallen muss': K.O. Müller (1825), pp. 246–7.

⁷³ A. Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, vol. II (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1899, second edition), p. 211, Chase (1949), pp. 64–5.

⁷⁴ A. Lang, *The Making of Religion* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1898), pp. 2–3, 317–35, cf. Lang I (1899), pp. xii–xiii, Dorson (1968), p. 171, Wheeler-Barclay (2010), pp. 129–33.

W. Schmidt (1868–1954), who met Lang towards the end of his life, would draw on the latter's theory of Supreme Beings to put forward his own theory of High Gods, showing how Christian scholars harnessed the 'weapons' of anthropology for their own purposes.⁷⁵ In advancing a theory of degeneration, Lang approximated Welcker's and Max Müller's positions on *Urmonotheismus*. It is an indicator of the extent of Christianizing influence on the scholarship of the period that these arch-enemies were in unison on this question.

According to Turner, Lang 'was not the person to establish a permanent connection between anthropology and the classics', for which he instead credited Frazer.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the writings of Lang played an important role as 'bridging' links between anthropology and classical scholarship in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, and were of influence on the study of Greek religion both in Britain and beyond.⁷⁷ By making use of anthropological material Lang was able to argue that the Greek gods had had a darker past than had appeared in the accounts of scholars in the physical tradition and, indeed, a darker present visible both in myth and cult. His work was effective in discrediting Indo-European

⁷⁵ J. Waardenburg, *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), pp. 264–5.

⁷⁶ Turner (1981), p. 119.

⁷⁷ Cf. Schlesier (1994), p. 150. The significance of Lang's work for Farnell and Harrison we shall see in the following sections. Lang also played an important part in G. Murray's familiarization with anthropology: 'I think it was the writings of my friend Mr. Andrew Lang that first awoke me, in my undergraduate days, to the importance of anthropology and primitive religion to a Greek scholar': G. Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1912), p. 5. For Marett as well Lang 'was the mustagogue . . . to whom I am indebted for my actual initiation', R.R. Marett, 'The Raw Material of Religion', in A.B. Webster, J.B. Salmond, G. Gordon, A. Shewan, R. R. Marett, R. S. Rait, J. Buchan, L. Cazamian, H.J.C. Grierson, and J.D. Mackie, *Concerning Andrew Lang: Being the Andrew Lang Lectures Delivered Before the University of St. Andrews, 1927–1937* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), pp. 1–24 at p. 3. On Lang's influence on S. Reinach (1858–1932) see R. Schlesier, 'Salomon Reinach et l'Anthropologie Moderne de la Grèce Ancienne', in S. Basch, M. Espagne, and J. Leclant (eds.), *Les Frères Reinach* (Paris: AIBL, 2008), pp. 127–39 at p. 130. Although Nilsson opposed Lang's theory of Supreme Beings, he praised his comparison of Greek myths to 'those of primitive peoples' and suggested that Lang's 'scientific importance was not sufficiently appreciated, even by his compatriots, because his interests were exceptionally wide and he was a fascinating writer'. Nilsson (1925), p. 47, M.P. Nilsson, 'Letter to Professor Arthur D. Nock on Some Fundamental Concepts in the Science of Religion', *The Harvard Theological Review* 42 (2), 1949, pp. 71–107 at p. 102.

Comparative Mythology as practised by Max Müller and his followers and in exposing the methodological shortcomings of physical interpretations in general, especially at the level of the public sphere. However, they did not address some of the major arguments advanced by advocates of physical interpretations. A more thorough engagement with the argumentation of scholars in the physical tradition would appear in Farnell's *The Cults of the Greek States*.

III. THE GREEK GODS BETWEEN GERMAN ALTERTHUMSWISSENSCHAFT AND BRITISH ANTHROPOLOGY: LEWIS RICHARD FARNELL (1856–1934)

Among the audience of the lectures that Ernst Curtius gave at the University of Berlin in the early 1880s was the young L.R. Farnell.⁷⁸ German scholarship, on the one hand, and the emergence of anthropology, on the other, provide the context for his greatest work, *The Cults of the Greek States* (1896–1909).⁷⁹ Farnell's *Cults* is a landmark in the history of scholarship on Greek religion. To those approaching the *Cults* influenced by Harrison's contemptuous opinion of Farnell's work,⁸⁰ or who are confronted by five learned, but dry volumes, this claim will sound like an implausible attempt at *amplificatio*. Yet it is not unwarranted. In the *Cults*, Farnell launched a fierce attack on several themes which had dominated the study of Greek religion in the nineteenth century and, indeed, in previous centuries: the search for the origins of Greek religion, the physical interpretation of the Greek gods and explanations based on the etymology of divine names. Farnell may not have been original in attacking any of these themes, yet he put forward one of the most

⁷⁸ L.R. Farnell, *An Oxonian Looks Back* (London: Hopkinson, 1934), p. 88.

⁷⁹ On Farnell's *Cults* see J. Henderson, 'Farnell's *Cults*. The Making and Breaking of Pausanias in Victorian Archaeology and Anthropology', in S.E. Alcock, J.F. Cherry, and J. Elsner (eds.), *Pausanias. Travel and Memory in Roman Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 207–23.

⁸⁰ A. Robinson, *The Life and Work of Jane Ellen Harrison* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 193–4. On Farnell's and Harrison's views of each other's work see Henderson (2001), p. 221.

comprehensive and effective critiques to appear in contemporary scholarship.⁸¹

Lewis Richard Farnell was born in 1856 in London in a liberal middle class family.⁸² He attended the City of London School from 1866 to 1874. In his autobiography, he stated that the study of the Bible formed an essential part of the curriculum and that he acquired a good knowledge of the Old and New Testament.⁸³ In his school years Farnell came under the influence of the Broad Church as represented by his school's headmaster, Edwin Abbott (1838–1926): 'I accepted the Bible without criticism . . . I felt strongly the emotional appeal of Christianity without any intellectual interest in Christology; I felt happy in my private devotion which consorted perfectly with my secular healthy-mindedness.'⁸⁴ As we shall see, healthy-mindedness was also a feature which Farnell eminently attributed to the Greeks. Farnell further stated that he went through a period of religious fervour characterized by intense church going, long prayers and 'a devoted reading of the Scriptures, especially the Psalms and the Prophets, and a passionate love of *Paradise Lost*' following the death of his eldest brother in 1870.⁸⁵ This phase was brought to an end by a crisis he experienced after the loss of his father in 1874.⁸⁶ By

⁸¹ As mentioned, in *Die Griechischen Culte und Mythen in ihren Beziehungen zu den Orientalischen Religionen* (1887) Gruppe subjected Indo-European Comparative Mythology as practiced by Kuhn and Max Müller to a very thorough criticism that ran over a hundred pages: Gruppe (1887), pp. 72–184. Cf. Bloch (1905), p. 438, Arvidsson (2006), p. 130. Gruppe's *Culte und Mythen* was a work of profound erudition, but did not have the impact on the discipline that Farnell's *Cults* did. In his support for Farnell's bid for a professorship in Edinburgh in 1903, S. Reinach, although acknowledging Gruppe's work as a 'masterpiece of learning', wrote that 'Mr Farnell's achievement possesses a serious advantage when compared with Gruppe's; it is readable and artistic, a real English book, as opposed to a German encyclopaedia': S. Reinach, *Testimonia* for Farnell's bid for the Edinburgh professorship in 1903, from Farnell papers at Exeter College Archives. Posterity has not necessarily shared Reinach's view on the attractiveness of Farnell's prose, though a comparison of the two works lends it some credibility. Bloch remarked of Gruppe's work that 'selbst einem Fachmanne ist es oft recht schwer, seinen komplizierten Gedankengängen zu folgen': Bloch (1905), pp. 430–1.

⁸² Farnell (1934), pp. 2, 8, R.R. Marett, 'Lewis Richard Farnell 1856–1934', *Proceedings of the British Academy* XX, 1934, pp. 285–96 at p. 285.

⁸³ Farnell (1934), pp. 2, 25.

⁸⁴ Farnell (1934), p. 26.

⁸⁵ Farnell (1934), pp. 25–6.

⁸⁶ '[the death of his father] delivered me finally from part of the traditional dogmatism, the belief in hell or punishment after death . . . I then found that to reject hell was to reject part of the New Testament. Therefore, as my brother's death first quickened religion in me, my father's quickened the earliest freedom of thought.' Farnell (1934), pp. 26–7.

the time he was old enough for university, Farnell described his temperament as 'vaguely religious . . . with a Christian colouring but with no fixed belief in prevailing theology'.⁸⁷ This seems to have remained his attitude later in life. Farnell began his undergraduate studies in Oxford in 1874. He stated that when he arrived in Oxford the atmosphere seemed to have settled from the theological debates that had raged when Max Müller had come to Oxford some thirty years earlier.⁸⁸ Farnell studied Classics (1874–78) in Oxford at a time when Max Müller's theories were still very popular and, as we shall see, he initially came under their influence.⁸⁹ After Oxford, Farnell pursued further studies in Germany (1881–82) as had become quite common for British scholars.⁹⁰ As Farnell stated, '... in science, philosophy and philology, and especially in the methods and organisation of research, Germany was qualified to be the guiding-star of Europe.'⁹¹ Farnell studied Greek art and archaeology at the Universities of Berlin with Curtius and Munich with H. Brunn (1822–94), attracted respectively by the sculptures of Pergamon and Aegina.⁹² In his autobiography Farnell mentioned that 'Greek art inevitably led me on to Greek mythology and religion, and this to the broader field of comparative religion'.⁹³ In this respect there is a parallel with Harrison who also began as a student of Greek art. As will be seen, Farnell's background in Greek art had a significant impact on his conception of the ethos of Greek religion, albeit a markedly different one than in the case of Harrison. One of Farnell's first mentors in the study of the latter was Conrad Bursian (1830–83) at Munich, a scholar in the tradition of Indo-European Comparative Mythology. In his autobiography, Farnell related that he had a large notebook full of his theories which he later destroyed.⁹⁴ Farnell further mentioned: 'I returned to England strongly philo-German'.⁹⁵ In the years leading up to the First World War Farnell would become increasingly disillusioned with the militarism, or, as he put it, the 'Prussianism' 'infecting' the German character.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, his appreciation of the welcoming international atmosphere he had experienced in German universities and

⁸⁷ Farnell (1934), p. 25.

⁸⁸ Farnell (1934), p. 57.

⁸⁹ Farnell (1934), p. 114.

⁹⁰ Turner (1981), p. 105.

⁹¹ Farnell (1934), pp. 79–80.

⁹² Farnell (1934), pp. 87–9.

⁹³ Farnell (1934), p. 91. Marett mentions that Pater's lectures in Oxford had 'kindled his interest in Greek art' Marett (1934), p. 287.

⁹⁴ Farnell (1934), p. 90.

⁹⁵ Farnell (1934), p. 96.

⁹⁶ Farnell (1934), pp. 80, 94–5, 327.

his admiration of their research ethos survived that period and the war itself,⁹⁷ even if, as we shall see, Farnell devoted a large part of his writings to refuting the views of German scholars. Soon after his return from Germany, Farnell became Junior Lecturer in Classics at Oxford, later Senior Tutor and Rector of Exeter and, ultimately, Vice-Chancellor of the university (1920–23).⁹⁸

In his preface to the first volume of the *Cults* (1896) Farnell stated that ‘a compendious account of Greek cults, that should analyze and estimate the record left by Greek literature and monuments of the popular and public religion, has long been a desideratum in English and even to a certain extent in German scholarship’.⁹⁹ Campbell confirms that ‘Mr. Farnell’s learned work on the “Cults of the Greek States” supplies a want which has long been felt in England’.¹⁰⁰ In fact, Farnell’s *Cults* has been described as ‘the first work of detailed and comprehensive scholarship on Greek religion ever published in English’.¹⁰¹ Echoing the stereotyped antagonism between German and British scholarship Marett stated of Farnell’s *Cults* that ‘combining as it did German erudition with British common sense, [it] immediately proclaimed him an authority of the first rank’.¹⁰²

Farnell further mentioned that ‘in the earliest days of my studies in this field, I was bred in the strictest sect of German mythologists; but some time before I contemplated writing on the subject I had come to distrust the method and point of view that were then and are even now prevalent in German scholarship’.¹⁰³ The ‘method and point of view’ which were ‘even now prevalent in German scholarship’ consisted, according to Farnell, in the assumption that ‘the object of the history of Greek religion is . . . to discover the nature-origin of the divinity and to trace it out in the myths’. This was how Farnell

⁹⁷ Farnell (1934), pp. 87–8, 96, Marett (1934), pp. 288–9.

⁹⁸ Farnell (1934), pp. 130, 266, 289. ⁹⁹ Farnell (1896a), p. vii.

¹⁰⁰ Campbell (1898), p. 5. He added that Farnell’s *Cults* ‘deals with the subject of Hellenic worship on lines that are more rational than those followed by many Continental writers’. Campbell (1898), p. 5.

¹⁰¹ R. Parker, ‘Gilbert Murray and Greek Religion’, in C. Stray (ed.), *Gilbert Murray Reassessed* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 81–102 at p. 88. It would be difficult for earlier British or American writings on Greek religion to rival Farnell’s *Cults* in terms of scope and standards of scholarship. For earlier Anglophone works see Feldman/Richardson (1972).

¹⁰² Marett (1934), p. 291.

¹⁰³ Farnell (1896a), p. x, Burkert (1980), pp. 167–8. On Farnell’s antagonism with German scholars see further Henderson (2001), pp. 216–17.

described the methodology of Welcker, which, he argued, was accepted by Preller (and, as he noted, also by Maury in France);¹⁰⁴ as we have seen, however, this does not do justice to Welcker's approach nor to the very considerable opposition to physical interpretations in German scholarship.

In an early essay on the Pergamene Frieze in 1882 Farnell espoused the view that 'the gods of the Olympian system were probably in the view of early belief high impersonations of different parts of the natural world'. Already at this point, however, he suggested that 'at a very early time they became divorced from their element, owing to the peculiar power and quality of Greek religion in transforming such ideas' and that the 'elemental significance of Athene as goddess of the pure heaven, or of Hermes as a god of the clouds or winds, recedes, and forms merely the background of local tradition'.¹⁰⁵ By 1888, when he reviewed the first volume of Roscher's *Lexikon*, he had become converted to anthropology by Lang and, like him, sharply criticized the method of physical interpretation of the Greek gods 'favoured' by German scholars. Exceptionally in the case of Apollo, however, he partly accepted the validity of the solar interpretation: 'it is certain the conception of Apollo as the sun-god, from which the writer [Roscher] proceeds, is the original one, and he is able to show that this aspect of the god is preserved in much of the ritual of the Apolline feasts, the Hyacinthia and the Daphnephoria'.¹⁰⁶ Later in his *Cults* Farnell launched a massive attack on physical interpretations of the Greek gods including the theory that Apollo was a solar god. Physical interpretations were amply advanced in the first volumes of Roscher's *Lexikon* which were in part contemporaneous with Farnell's *Cults*; however, as we have seen, they had been subjected to heavy criticism for decades in Germany not least, by Farnell's teacher at Berlin, Curtius. As in the case of Lang all this German reaction went unmentioned by Farnell—as was the fact that physical interpretations were also put forward by (admittedly German-influenced) British scholars like Blackie, or Farnell's fellow Oxonian and erstwhile teacher, Walter Pater (1839–94).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Farnell (1896a), pp. 3–4, n. c.

¹⁰⁵ L.R. Farnell, 'The Pergamene Frieze: Its Relation to Literature and Tradition', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 3, 1882, pp. 301–38 at p. 311.

¹⁰⁶ L.R. Farnell, 'Reviews. Greek Mythology', *The Classical Review* 2 (5), 1888a, pp. 133–8 at p. 135.

¹⁰⁷ On Pater's interpretation of Greek myths see Connor (1989), pp. 207–16.

Moreover, Farnell hailed the recent contributions of anthropology to the study of Greek religion.¹⁰⁸ Although acknowledging the importance of the work of Mannhardt, Farnell asserted that in this field 'English research has taken the lead'.¹⁰⁹ Thus, though he expressed his gratitude for the academic hospitality he had enjoyed at the universities of Germany and his regret 'that hostile criticism of much German work should take so prominent a place in my book',¹¹⁰ his praise of anthropology and criticism of physical interpretations suggests an effort to demonstrate that by the last years of the nineteenth century, English scholarship had overtaken the German. As in the case of Lang's writings, despite its criticism of German scholarship, Farnell's *Cults* received praise in Germany.¹¹¹

If Farnell was dismissive of the 'German' method of physical interpretation, he welcomed, as seen, the contribution of English anthropologists—as he referred to Frazer, Lang and Robertson Smith—to the study of Greek religion.¹¹² In his view, they had effected a transformation in the understanding of Greek ritual and mythology by demonstrating that the latter is 'not merely highly figurative conversation about the weather, but like ritual itself is often a reflexion of by-gone society and institutions'.¹¹³ Furthermore,

¹⁰⁸ One year earlier Rohde had likewise dismissed the physical interpretations of Indo-European Comparative Mythology and argued in favour of the emergent anthropological approach: Rohde (1895), pp. 6–7. In line with what may be said to be a pattern of not mentioning German critics of physical interpretations, Farnell did not refer to Rohde's *Die Religion der Griechen*, although, as will be seen, it was strikingly close in other respects as well to the views he advanced in the *Cults*.

¹⁰⁹ Farnell (1896a), p. 8.

¹¹⁰ Farnell (1896a), p. x.

¹¹¹ Gruppe called it 'ein ebenfalls durch gute Auswahl und Übersichtlichkeit des Stoffes hervorragendes Werk', but noted its high price, due to its size and illustrations, for German readers. The fact that Gruppe referred to Farnell's *Cults* as 'Mythologie' provides a further example of the ways the term could be used in German scholarship: Gruppe (1921), p. 200. Ziehen praised Farnell's 'ruhige, methodische Erörterung', but deplored that the first volumes of his *Cults* were not as known in Germany as they deserved: L. Ziehen, 'L.R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*', *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* 173 (II), 1911, pp. 105–19 at pp. 117, 105. Deubner was likewise praiseful of Farnell's *Greece and Babylon*: 'Die Frage nach dem Einfluß der mesopotamischen auf die frühhellenische . . . Religion erörtert L.R. Farnell in seiner sorgfältigen, weitblickenden, unbestechlichen Art.' Deubner (1920–1921), p. 170.

¹¹² 'The results of this new science have been already of the greatest value for the student of Greek cults' Farnell (1896a), p. 9.

¹¹³ Farnell (1896a), p. 9. Cf. Graf (1993), p. 26. G.W. Most, 'Vom Logos zum Mythos', in Korenjak/Töchterle (2001), pp. 11–27 at p. 23. Cf. Rohde's remark that Indo-European Comparative Mythology turned ancient mythologies into 'eine Art mythologischer Meteorologie' Rohde (1895), p. 6.

by recognizing that ritual is the 'chiefly conservative part of religion' in which 'the older and cruder ideas are held as in petrification' anthropology had done 'much to explain the strange contradiction that often exists between the ritualistic act and the more ideal view about the divinity'.¹¹⁴ Farnell emphasized that through the application of the anthropological method 'for the first time we came to understand the true significance of many of the crude and repulsive facts in Hellenic religion—the human sacrifices, the reverence paid to animals, stones, and trees, the demonology and magic rites. Many of these practices had lost their meaning for the more advanced generations, who nevertheless retained them under the strong constraint of religious conservatism'.¹¹⁵ However, Farnell was also critical of what he perceived as the tendency to play up the 'primitive' aspects of Greek religion in contemporary anthropologically influenced scholarship.¹¹⁶ He was, for example, against the view that the initiation-rituals of 'savages' could shed any significant light on the Eleusinian mysteries as Lang or Harrison suggested, pronouncing 'the central mystery of Greece innocent of totemism, cannibalism, human sacrifice, or of any orgiastic or "matriarchal" [*sic*] excess'.¹¹⁷

What is more, he underscored that in writing *The Cults of the Greek States* his aim had been different from the aims of the writings of Lang or Frazer. The *Cults* were not conceived as an enquiry into 'savage' survivals and practices, but rather were intended to provide 'a complete account of the names and ideas that were attached, and of the ceremonies that were consecrated, by the Greek states to their chief divinities'.¹¹⁸ Farnell acknowledged that in selecting as his

¹¹⁴ Farnell (1896a), p. 9.

¹¹⁵ L.R. Farnell, *The Evolution of Religion. An Anthropological Study* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1905), pp. 10–11.

¹¹⁶ Cf. his statement that 'we may feel with some uneasiness that recent expositions of Hellenic religion [Harrison's *Prolegomena* is probably one of the targets] tend, unintentionally no doubt, to distort the view of the reader and to produce a false impression by exaggerating the savage and primitive facts, missing the true perspective and misjudging the whole'. Farnell (1905), p. 15. Cf. Turner (1981), p. 130. There is a parallel with Warde Fowler's call for caution in the use of anthropological material and insights in the study of Roman religion: W.W. Fowler, *The Religious Experience of the Roman People* (London: Macmillan, 1911), pp. 18–21.

¹¹⁷ L.R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907b), p. 129. Farnell argued against the thesis of an early period of matriarchy in L.R. Farnell, 'Sociological Hypotheses Concerning the Position of Women in Ancient Religion', *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 7, 1904, pp. 70–94.

¹¹⁸ Farnell (1896a), p. viii.

subject the public cults of Greece he would not be providing a comprehensive account of Greek religion inasmuch as he would not be treating such topics as philosophical religion or the 'private mystic religion' of later periods. However, in the preface to the last volume of his *Cults* he defended his choice of subject on the grounds that the official cults of the Greek states represented 'throughout a long period what was strongest and most attractive in the popular religion' and, further, that for long there was little difference between private and state religion. Farnell stressed that 'the history of the state-cults is the main exposition of Greek religion'.¹¹⁹ In this context we should note Farnell's negative view of the Orphics. He ranked them 'among the disruptive forces of individualistic religion, undermining the social fabric of public worship' and held that 'Their downfall relieved Hellas from the danger of the establishment of Orphism as a secular power, which threatened the Hellenic spirit with a bondage to sacerdotalism and the pharisaic formalism of the purist'.¹²⁰ The contrast with Jane Harrison, who, as we shall see, celebrated the rise of the Orphics, is only one among the many in their approaches to Greek religion.¹²¹

We have seen how even if the terms 'Mythologie' and 'Religion' could be used interchangeably in German scholarship, the distinction between mythology and religion was also an important theme in the work of several scholars. Farnell held that the study of Greek religion in Britain had for long been impeded by its confusion with Greek mythology, 'that apparently bizarre and hopeless thing', and in the *Cults* he pronounced his intention to 'disentangle myth from religion, only dealing with the former so far as it seems to illustrate or reveal the latter'.¹²² Some twenty-five years later, he opened his *Outline-History of Greek Religion* reiterating the claim to novelty of the distinction: 'The foundation of a serious and scientific study of Greek religion, as distinct from the mere mythology of Hellas, may almost be said to have been an achievement of the last generation of scholars. And it is only through recent research that the Hellenic

¹¹⁹ L.R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, vol. V (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909a), p. iv. In this context, we may note how in recent scholarship, Sourvinou-Inwood has argued that 'The *polis* provided the fundamental framework in which Greek religion operated'. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'What is Polis Religion?', in Buxton (2000), p. 13.

¹²⁰ Farnell (1921), pp. 83–4, 86.

¹²¹ On the differences between Farnell's and Harrison's approaches see Turner (1981), pp. 129–31, Henderson (2001), p. 221.

¹²² Farnell (1896a), pp. vii, viii.

spirit, so creative and imperial in the domains of literature, art and science, can be recognised as manifesting itself not unworthily in the sphere of religion.¹²³ Farnell emphasized that whereas Greek mythology was 'passionate and picturesque' Greek religion, was 'on the whole, sober and sane'.¹²⁴ As seen, Farnell described his own attitude as healthy-minded. The emphasis on Greek sanity was further a prominent aspect of the Victorian and Edwardian idealization of Greece from Arnold and Ruskin to the Gardner brothers.¹²⁵

Farnell elaborated on this characterization of Greek religion in *Greece and Babylon* (1911), a work in which he sought to counter theories deriving Greek religion from the religion of Babylon.¹²⁶ In contrast to Harrison who in her *Prolegomena* laid stress on such beings as demons and ghosts, Farnell asserted that 'certainly not in early nor often in later Greece were men habitually devil-ridden'.¹²⁷ The anthropomorphism and beauty of their gods reflected their tendency to conceive the divine as fundamentally friendly towards man. The pages and plates in the *Cults* devoted to the 'ideal types' of the gods highlight the differences with Harrison's *Prolegomena* which focused on visual representations of terrifying figures like the *Keres*. In *Greece and Babylon*, Farnell emphatically reiterated that 'on the whole and comparatively, early Greek religion, when we first catch a glimpse of it, appears bright and sane, a religion of the healthy-minded and of men in the open air'.¹²⁸ Recalling the opposition

¹²³ Farnell (1921), p. 7.

¹²⁴ Farnell (1896a), p. ix. Cf. Henderson (2001), pp. 217–18. Farnell reiterated in *The Higher Aspects of Greek Religion* that 'Greek worship was generally pure and solemn... while the mythology was sometimes frivolous and impure': L.R. Farnell, *The Higher Aspects of Greek Religion. Lectures Delivered at Oxford and London in April and May 1911* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1912), p. 130.

¹²⁵ Turner (1981), pp. 22, 41, 56.

¹²⁶ On the theories of the so called 'Pan-Babylonists' such as A. Jeremias (1864–1935) and H. Winckler (1863–1913) see Marchand (1996), p. 223, Marchand (2009), pp. 236–44.

¹²⁷ Farnell (1911), p. 157.

¹²⁸ Farnell (1911), p. 157. Cf. Farnell's view of Pindar, Aeschylus and Sophocles: 'all three [unlike Euripides] show the virility, the mental tranquillity combined with imagination and audacity, that marked the typical character of the greatest age of Hellas.' Farnell (1921), p. 105. Farnell further stated of Pindar that he 'remained all his life a devotee of the bright Hellenic polytheism': L.R. Farnell, *The Works of Pindar*, vol. II (London: Macmillan, 1932), p. 459, which to an extent can be said of Farnell himself. Farnell's portrayal of Greek religion as 'a religion of the healthy-minded and of men in the open air' may have also been influenced by the ideals of manly or muscular Christianity: D. Rosen, 'The Volcano and the Cathedral: Muscular Christianity and

between the Greek and the 'Oriental' religions in the writings of earlier scholars like K.O. Müller, Farnell further maintained that 'the religious temperaments of the Babylonian and Hellene... appeared as separate as the opposite points of the pole; the rapturous fanatic and self-abasing spirit of the East contrasting vividly with the coolness, civic sobriety, and self-confidence of the West'.¹²⁹ In portraying Greek religion in terms of brightness, sobriety and geniality Farnell was reproducing a stereotype about the tranquillity and *Heiterkeit* of Greek culture which, either directly or indirectly through mediators like Arnold, went back to the German idealization of Greece in the beginning of the nineteenth century and even further back to Winckelmann. Thus, although at one level it launched an attack on the methods of German scholarship, at another level, Farnell's *Cults* was imbued with the idealized German view of classical Greece. In this context, the role of Farnell's background as a student of Greek art should be highlighted. In his view, 'the art-monuments presented at least as deep and as illuminating a revelation of the popular religious mind as did the literature'.¹³⁰ The representations of the gods in the classical art of the fifth century, he stressed, were 'mainly tranquil, majestic, ethical, intellectual'.¹³¹ We should

the Origins of Primal Manliness', in D.E. Hall (ed.), *Muscular Christianity. Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 17–44.

¹²⁹ Farnell (1911), p. 305. In a similar tone, Farnell stated in the *Cults* that (unlike the worship of Artemis or Dionysos) the worship of Athena was not 'tainted with Oriental or barbaric ideas, with orgiastic excess, with impure symbolism or mystery': Farnell (1896a), p. 318.

¹³⁰ Farnell (1934), p. 339. Farnell further stated that 'the surviving works of sculpture, painting, and glyptic, wrought for either public or private purposes, present us often not only with facts of religion and ritual unrecorded in literature, but also with an impression, hard to gain otherwise, of the religious consciousness of the people, and serve also as witnesses to the strength of the religious feeling'. L.R. Farnell, 'Greece, Greek Religion', in J. Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. VI (Edinburgh: Clark, 1913a), pp. 392–425 at p. 394.

¹³¹ Farnell (1921), p. 100, Farnell (1913a), p. 412. Cf. his view that 'the expressive power of such an art [from the fifth century] can show benignity and mildness of mood without sentimentality, beauty without voluptuousness, intellectual thought without morbidness, majesty without self-display'. Farnell (1913a), p. 412. By contrast, Farnell held in no esteem the 'mixed' forms of Hellenistic art. Thus he stated of Alexandrine Amon heads that they were 'one illustration of the evil effect upon Greek religious sculptures of the *θεοκρασία*—the confusion of Greek and foreign religious ideas'. L.R. Farnell, 'Some Museums of Northern Europe', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 9, 1888b, pp. 31–46 at p. 37. Cf. his reference to 'The decay which is so marked in the religious effect of the Alexandrine sculpture'. Farnell (1888b), p. 42.

note, however, that despite the emphasis he placed on the theme of sobriety, Farnell could also be appreciative of the ecstasy of Dionysiac worship: 'we can understand the power of its appeal: its orgiastic dance and revel gratified the primaeval passion that is still strong in us for self-abandonment and for ecstatic communion with the life and power of the earth.'¹³² Even as its own focus was on other aspects, Farnell's work, like Harrison's, thus attests to the broad attraction that the themes of ecstasy and of communion with nature exercised in late Victorian Britain.

In addition to laying stress on the sobriety and sanity of Greek religion, Farnell argued for the recognition of its high moral character.¹³³ He revealingly regarded the consecration of family duties as the 'master-work of Greek religion'.¹³⁴ The plausibility of Farnell's portrayal of the ethos of Greek religion depended upon the distinction between religion and mythology which he again hastened to underline: 'the immorality of certain Greek myths concerning the deities has sometimes been a stumbling-block to the belief that the religion was closely interwoven with the higher personal morality of the people. We may evade this difficulty by maintaining that religion—that is to say, worship and serious thoughts about the deity—is often independent of the popular tales about the divine personages; folk-stories are irresponsible and rarely satisfy the higher religious consciousness.'¹³⁵ The theme that Greek religious morality was 'advanced' recurs in all of Farnell's works. It is most explicit in his characteristically entitled *The Higher Aspects of Greek Religion* (1912) in which Farnell devoted chapters to such themes as 'The religious bond and morality of the family' and 'Influence of the civic system of religion upon religious

¹³² Farnell (1909a), p. 108. Farnell went on to add that 'on the other hand, it must often have repelled the sober and civic temperament by its savage cruelty and the violent mental perturbation and reaction that it evoked'. Still, his overall stance towards the worship of Dionysos appears sympathetic. Cf. his statement that 'the worship of the wine-god will only seem trivial or shallow to those who have neither knowledge nor imagination of the ancient religious perception'. Farnell (1909a), p. 122 and 'in the Bacchic service it [vegetation-ritual] evoked moods of ecstatic self-abandonment which in the poetry of Euripides seem to be tingling with the joy of living and with the intoxicating sense of the bursting life of the wild earth'. L.R. Farnell, *The Attributes of God. The Gifford Lectures Delivered in the University of St. Andrews in the Year 1924-25* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), p. 71.

¹³³ Cf. Turner (1981), pp. 130-1.

¹³⁴ Farnell (1912), p. 43.

¹³⁵ Farnell (1912), pp. 129-30. Cf. Turner (1981), p. 130.

thought, morality and law'.¹³⁶ In calling attention to the moral dimension of Greek religion Farnell was trying to 'rescue' it from the one-sided stress on its 'primitive' aspects by anthropological writers and to demonstrate that modern Western morality was indebted to Greek religious morality. In the religion of Greece, he had stressed a few years earlier in his Wilde Lecture on Natural and Comparative Religion, 'one finds much, indeed, that is primitive, even savage, but much also of religious thought and religious ethic, unsuspected by former generations of scholars, that has become a rich inheritance of our higher culture'.¹³⁷

Farnell emphatically opened his introduction to the first volume of the *Cults* with the pronouncement that 'the question of origins may be put aside'. As we have seen, for all their differences, scholars in the tradition of Indo-European Comparative Mythology, advocates of the historical-critical approach and anthropological writers were in agreement in attaching importance to the discovery of origins, not to mention scholars of earlier periods. Farnell conceded that it may be true that, as the natural scientists held, 'one does not fully and perfectly know the present character of a fact unless one also knows the embryology of it'. He subversively argued, however, that in the case of Greek religion and its gods, even if it were possible to discover their origins, these were essentially of no consequence for the understanding of how they later developed: 'it must then be allowed not only that the question of origins stands apart from the question about the later historical facts, but that the discovery of the origin will often throw but little light on these'.¹³⁸ In deprioritizing the question of origins, Farnell was on common ground with certain contemporary classical scholars like Campbell or Wilamowitz who were more interested in the 'developed' forms of Greek religion rather than in its 'primitive' beginnings. Nevertheless, not only anthropologists, but also other classical scholars from Usener to Roscher and Harrison remained focused on the question of origins at the time when Farnell was writing. In the light of this,

¹³⁶ Farnell (1912), pp. 25–47, 73–91.

¹³⁷ L.R. Farnell, *Inaugural Lecture of the Wilde Lecturer in Natural and Comparative Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1909b), p. 4. Despland notes the wider interest in the 'higher aspects' of Greek religion among British scholars with a liberal Protestant background in the period. He draws a comparison in this respect between the writings of Farnell and E. Caird's *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers* (1904) and J. Adams' *The Religious Teachers of Greece* (1908): Despland (1974), pp. 122–3.

¹³⁸ Farnell (1896a), pp. 1–2, 8.

the view that 'the Introduction [of Farnell's *Cults*] proceeds with a review of relevant theory for window-dressing; "origins" are "put aside"',¹³⁹ does not seem to me to do justice to the historical significance of Farnell's criticism of the search for origins.

In the *Cults* Farnell mounted a frontal attack against physical interpretations of the Greek gods, beginning with Indo-European Comparative Mythology.¹⁴⁰ In his autobiography Farnell mentioned that he had been 'reared on his [Max Müller's] theories about "Aryan" origins and especially on the faith that many of the Sanskrit deities were the prototypes of the Greek Olympians'. Moreover, in the course of his stay at Oxford Farnell became closely acquainted with Max Müller.¹⁴¹ As we saw, however, the writings of Lang won him over to anthropology. Thus, following Lang's lead, Farnell argued that the principles of Indo-European Comparative Mythology had been flawed. He maintained that the assumption that the Vedas could shed light on the origins of Aryan religions because they were the oldest Aryan religious document had proven to be ill-founded: it was increasingly recognized that they had, in fact, been the product of an advanced stage of religious development. Moreover, Farnell joined the growing number of critics who held that, with the exception of the identification of 'Zeus' with 'Dyaus', most etymological equations between the names of Greek and Vedic deities proposed by the 'philologists' were untenable,¹⁴² and ultimately cast doubt on arguments from etymology altogether. It should be noted that, despite the heavy criticism levelled against Indo-European Comparative Mythology in both Germany and Britain by the end of the nineteenth century, comparative research on Indo-European mythologies and religions, though not necessarily based on etymological parallels, would continue. One of its most important twentieth-century advocates was the

¹³⁹ Henderson (2001), p. 216.

¹⁴⁰ Farnell (1896a), pp. 2–8.

¹⁴¹ Farnell (1934), p. 114.

¹⁴² Farnell (1896a), p. 2, n. b. Farnell's criticism did not affect Max Müller. In his autobiography, Farnell recounted how the older scholar 'in a friendly and confidential talk with me, when the Clarendon Press were considering the first volumes of my *Cults of the Greek States*, in which Max detected that I was straying away from the "orthodox" fold and was enlisting myself under the banner of Andrew Lang, [he] solemnly warned me of the fatal error I was committing, of the infallible certainty of his own theories and of those of the other Germans of the same school, and of the futility of anthropology as a key to religious problems'. Farnell (1934), pp. 114–15.

French scholar G. Dumézil (1898–1986).¹⁴³ As we shall see, his views came to exercise major influence on the modern study of the Greek gods primarily through structuralist writings.

To go back to Farnell's criticism of physical interpretations, he maintained that, even if one conceded that the origins of the Greek gods had been elemental, the methodology that scholars in the physical tradition tended to employ was objectionable. He argued that they tended not to draw a clear distinction between the original conception of a deity and its later conceptions in historical times, whereas, in his view, these were not only distinct, but essentially unrelated. Secondly, like Lang (and the advocates of the historical-critical approach), Farnell regarded the attempts to explain all the aspects of a god via reference to a single *Grundbedeutung* as stretching the bounds of plausibility.¹⁴⁴ As we mentioned, he singled out the interpretations of Roscher as exemplifying the 'reductio ad absurdum of the physical-allegorical theory'.¹⁴⁵ In addition to the broader methodological objections he raised against physical interpretations, Farnell closely examined in his account of the various Greek gods the argumentation advanced by scholars like Preller, Roscher and, especially, Welcker, and sought to counter it. Owing to this attempt at comprehensive refutation, his work can be said to have been instrumental in the demise of physical interpretations.

III.I. The Refutation of the Case for a Solar Apollo

As in the case of Usener, the spearhead of Farnell's attack against physical interpretations was his criticism of the theory that Apollo was by origin a solar god. As we saw, in 1873 Roscher had claimed that Apollo's solar origins were almost taken for granted in contemporary scholarship. In his review of Roscher's *Lexikon* in 1888, Farnell himself had granted, as we saw, that 'it is certain the conception of Apollo as the sun-god, from which the writer proceeds, is the

¹⁴³ F. Graf, 'Myth', in S. Iles Johnston (ed.), *Religions of the Ancient World. A Guide* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 2004), pp. 45–58 at p. 46. On Dumézil see further Lincoln (1999), pp. 121–37. W.W. Belier, *Decayed Gods. Origins and Developments of Georges Dumézil's 'Idéologie Tripartite'* (Leiden: Brill, 1991). For recent examinations of Indo-European elements in Greek religion see West (2007), Burkert (2011), pp. 33–9.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Henderson (2001), p. 217.

¹⁴⁵ Farnell (1896a), pp. 7–8.

original one'.¹⁴⁶ Almost twenty years later Farnell attested to its lasting popularity despite the criticism of major scholars like Curtius or Usener. In the fourth volume of his *Cults* in 1907, in which he examined Apollo, he maintained that 'the solar theory, which ruled so much of the nineteenth century speculation on ancient polytheism, still dazzles many people's eyes'.¹⁴⁷ The portrayal of Apollo as originally a sun-god, he contended, 'is still dominant in handbooks and monographs, and is accepted by ordinary Greek scholarship as an article of faith'. In addition to the eminent names of German scholarship like Welcker or Preller, its adherents were said to include 'nearly all English scholars and archaeologists'.¹⁴⁸ Farnell claimed tendentiously that virtually the only one to have disputed it had been K.O. Müller in the distant 1820s.¹⁴⁹ Farnell granted that there was nothing inherently implausible in the view that Apollo had originally been a solar deity and cautioned that 'a healthy reaction against the foolish extravagances of the solar-myth theory' should not 'prejudice us against considering its relevance in any given case'. However, he maintained that the key questions were whether 'in the historic period this deity was recognized as the sun-god by the ordinary Greek, or, if not, whether the most ancient myths, cult-titles or ritual reveal this as the prehistoric conception'.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Farnell (1888a), p. 135.

¹⁴⁷ L.R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, vol. IV (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907a), p. 136. One year earlier Nilsson likewise attested to the continuing popularity of the solar interpretation of Apollo. He questioned it, without, however, refuting it *in extenso*: 'Apollon, die strahlende und lichtumflossene Gestalt des griechischen Olymp, wird fast einstimmig als Lichtgott angesehen, obgleich die Belege und Beweise recht spät einsetzen oder auch von zweifelhafter Beschaffenheit sind.' M.P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste von religiöser Bedeutung mit Ausschluss der Attischen* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1906), p. 97.

¹⁴⁸ Farnell (1907a), p. 136.

¹⁴⁹ Farnell (1907a), p. 136. Farnell also noted that Gruppe 'expresses the view that the identification of Apollo with the Sun-god was old but not aboriginal', but made no further mention of other recent or contemporary (German) critics like his teacher, Curtius or Wernicke, who in his entry on Apollo in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie* criticized Roscher's solar interpretation and argued that Apollo's identification with the sun was not original: K. Wernicke, 'Apollon', *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. II (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1896), pp. 1–111 at pp. 19–21. Another unmentioned critic was Lehmann who argued that the conception of Apollo as a sun-god was a late development: E. Lehmann, 'Die Griechen', in P.D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, vol. 2 (Freiburg/Leipzig/Tübingen: Mohr, 1897, second edition), pp. 218–358 at p. 276.

¹⁵⁰ Farnell (1907a), p. 136.

In addressing these questions, Farnell underlined, at a first level, that the identification of Apollo with Helios in philosophical thought and in cult in late antiquity should not be used to draw inferences about the way Apollo was commonly perceived in earlier periods. At a further level, he argued, like Voss, that in the early literary sources such as Homer or Hesiod there was no evidence to suggest an association between Apollo and the sun.¹⁵¹ For advocates of Apollo's solar origins, his portrayal in literature and art as an archer indicated a solar connection as they regarded his arrows as symbols of the sunbeams. Farnell objected that Apollo's and Helios' representation in literature and art did not suggest a connection: the Greeks tended to represent Helios as a charioteer rather than as archer while Apollo was not associated with 'horses or the chariot'.¹⁵² Moreover, Farnell briefly considered Apolline myths. In this context, he confined himself to stating that, with the exception of the theme of cattle-stealing, the myths of Helios bore no similarity to the myths of Apollo and that 'no sane criticism can find any solar meaning in the legend of Apollo's exile from heaven or his visit to the Hyperboreans or his periodical absences or returns, or even his combat with Python'.¹⁵³

Farnell engaged at greater length with 'the facts of Greek cult, the only evidence which is of real importance for us'.¹⁵⁴ He focused especially on arguments from a) Apollo's cultic epithets and b) Apolline ritual. His general strategy was characterized by an emphasis on the practical and the accidental as opposed to the method of explanation via reference to a notional solar *Grundbedeutung*.

a) As we saw, Welcker had maintained that such epithets or names of Apollo as *Λύκειος*, *Αἰγλήτης*, *Ἑῶος*, *Ωρομέδων*, *Φοῖβος* or *Φαναίος* indicated a solar aspect. Farnell examined each of them, either disputing that they had a solar meaning or, if he conceded that they had, suggesting that they had originally arisen out of practical or superficial considerations rather than from any substantial solar affinity. Thus he argued that etymologically Apollo *Λύκειος* could only mean 'Apollo of the wolves' and not 'Apollo of

¹⁵¹ Farnell (1907a), p. 137.

¹⁵² Farnell (1907a), pp. 137, 142. Cf. Farnell's view that 'Greek art of the autonomous period betrays no consciousness of the solar character of Apollo' Farnell (1907a), p. 316.

¹⁵³ Farnell (1907a), p. 141.

¹⁵⁴ Farnell (1907a), p. 138.

light', or that the epithet *Ἐῶος* 'may have arisen from the eastward position of his statue or temple which caught the first rays of the morning, or from a sacrifice offered to him at dawn'. He further maintained that Apollo's epithet *Ῥομέδων* did not suggest a solar aspect any more than Zeus' and Hera's epithets *Ῥόλυτος* and that these titles 'merely designate the divinities as lords of the hours or seasons'. In this context, Farnell also argued that Apollo's representation in art in the company of the Hours, which for Welcker had solar connotations, was sufficiently explained by his role as a protector of agriculture. In the case of *Φοῖβος*, Farnell stated that if it 'can only be interpreted in a solar sense, it will give the strongest support to the view that at least in pre-Homeric or Mycenaean days the god possessed a widely recognized solar character'. He acknowledged that 'the word contains the root of *φᾶος*, "light"', but speculated that the epithet *Φοῖβος* might have been 'a poetical expression' for Apollo's 'radiant beauty' or his 'unstained purity'. Hence he argued that 'we may then know the root-meaning of *Φοῖβος*, but we cannot say we know the exact original significance of the word in its application to Apollo, and it gives no real support to the solar or to any other theory concerning him'.¹⁵⁵

b) As we saw, in 1888, Farnell held that in his article on Apollo in the *Lexikon* Roscher had successfully demonstrated that 'this aspect of the god [his solar origin] is preserved in much of the ritual of the Apolline feasts, the Hyakinthia and the Daphnephoria'.¹⁵⁶ This position he revised in the *Cults*. Thus Farnell explained away the sacrifices to Helios and the Hours in the Attic festivals of the Pyanepsia and Thargelia, maintaining that 'associations of the most diverse divinities are so frequent in Greek ritual that very little can be deduced from them concerning the question of original affinity'.¹⁵⁷ He further argued that there was no evidence for any substantial association of Apollo with the sun in the case of the Boeotian Daphnephoria. According to the report of Photius, in the Daphnephoria a piece of olive-wood was carried, fitted with bronze balls

¹⁵⁵ Farnell (1907a), pp. 114ff., 139–41.

¹⁵⁷ Farnell (1907a), p. 143.

¹⁵⁶ Farnell (1888a), p. 135.

designating the sun 'with whom they connected Apollo', the moon and the stars, and decorated with 365 garlands allegedly symbolizing the course of the year. In an example of the difference between an approach inspired by the anthropological focus on vegetation and the solar interpretation, Farnell asserted that in the light of the work of Mannhardt and Frazer that ritual ought to be recognized as belonging to the class of 'the maypole processions, universal in the peasant-religion of Europe, of which the object is to quicken the vitalizing powers of the year in the middle of spring or at the beginning of the summer'. In his view, it should not be understood in terms of solar worship but rather of sun-magic, an 'integral part of vegetation-ritual', which 'was immemorial in Greece, and owing to different local accidents, attached itself to different higher worships, here to an Athena, there to an Apollo'. Thus his verdict was that the Daphnephoria 'brings no real support to the old theory that Apollo developed from Helios'.¹⁵⁸

Farnell further noted that the recent discoveries of Sir Arthur Evans (1851–1941) were said to provide new evidence for the old theory that Apollo was by origin a solar god.¹⁵⁹ In his 'Mycenaean Tree and Pillar cult and its Mediterranean Relations' (1901) Evans argued that the sun had been extensively worshipped in pre-Dorian Greece under 'the deep underlying influence of Egyptian solar cult which our researches so continually encounter',¹⁶⁰ in what may be seen as a partial revival of the old theories of influence from Egyptian sun-worship on Greek religion. Evans further claimed to have found an Egyptian solar predecessor of Apollo Amyklaios and Ares on a ring from Knossos depicting a spear-holding male deity descending from the sky with rays coming out from his shoulders.¹⁶¹ Farnell conceded that sun-worship may have played a considerable role in Mycenaean Greece and that later Greek deities 'might step into the

¹⁵⁸ Farnell (1907a), pp. 143, 284–5.

¹⁵⁹ Farnell (1907a), pp. 143–4. Likewise the view that Hera was a lunar goddess was reinforced by Schliemann's findings of cow-shaped figurines in Mycenae: Farnell (1896a), p. 181.

¹⁶⁰ A.J. Evans, 'Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult and its Mediterranean Relations', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 21, 1901, pp. 99–204 at p. 173.

¹⁶¹ 'On the ring from Knossos this warrior Sun-God is armed with a spear or javelin—an archaic trait preserved by the Amyklaean Apollo and the solar Ares of Thrace.' Evans (1901), p. 174. Cf. Farnell (1907a), p. 144.

place of a Helios or take over his ritual'. In respect of Evans' theory of the solar antecedent of Apollo Amyklaios, however, he argued that the spear which the deity on the Knossos ring and Apollo Amyklaios shared as an attribute did not suffice to lend it credibility and stressed that there was no evidence for solar elements in the sources on the Hyakinthia.¹⁶²

Like Voss and K.O. Müller before him, Farnell concluded that 'Apollo-Helios was a late by-product in Greek religion rather than the god of the aboriginal cult'.¹⁶³ There can be no doubt that Farnell's meticulous examination of a large body of Apolline material brought a refreshing element of common sense to an area that had been plagued by the interpretive flights of fancy of advocates of the solar theory. To that extent it can be said to have signalled the beginning of a new phase in the history of the study of Apollo. In his *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (1941), Nilsson would state that 'today one needs no more to fight against that assumption [that Apollo was by origin a solar god]' and referred the reader to Farnell's refutation.¹⁶⁴ We should note, however, that, as for advocates of the historical-critical approach and rationalist scholars, for Farnell as well, there were high stakes involved in the question of whether Apollo had been a solar god and, more broadly, of whether the major Greek gods had been elemental. As he revealingly stated with respect to the debate over the solar Apollo, 'the discussion is important, apart from the necessity of always examining afresh a conventional belief of scholarship, science or religion; for the career of a religion which is mainly based on transparent nature-worship [we saw, though, that this was not Forchhammer's or Preller's view of Greek religion] may be widely different from that of one whose personalities are concrete, moral, and supra-physical'.¹⁶⁵ Farnell's stance marked a break with the notion of an absolute contrast between the ethical religion of the Greeks and 'Oriental' nature-religions as encountered in the writings of some earlier critics of physical interpretations—without, however, rejecting it altogether. Thus, on the one hand, he maintained that 'the distinction between the religions of the Hellenes and "the barbarians," which Aristophanes defines as the difference between the worship of ideal divine personages...and the direct worship of elementary powers, such as sun and moon, is not borne out by

¹⁶² Farnell (1907a), p. 144.

¹⁶⁴ Nilsson (1941), p. 499.

¹⁶³ Farnell (1907a), p. 144.

¹⁶⁵ Farnell (1907a), p. 144.

modern research... We can only distinguish the Greek from the Oriental in respect of Nature-religion by the lesser degree of devotion that the Hellene showed to it.¹⁶⁶ On the other hand, as we saw, Farnell placed great emphasis in the *Cults* on distinguishing between the worship of the Olympian gods and the worship of elemental gods. His later study, *The Attributes of God* (1925) sheds light on what he regarded to be problematic about the worship of nature. Recalling once again the criticism levelled against physical interpretations in earlier nineteenth-century scholarship, he stated that 'the difficulty in nature-worship is the difficulty of developing purely elemental deities into moral personalities'.¹⁶⁷ Although in some cases, as, for example, in the religion of India, this could be achieved, the example of Egyptian religion 'showed' that 'so long as the deities were immersed in the natural object or phenomenon, the river, the fire, the storm, the cloud or the wind, it was difficult for the religious imagination to clothe them with the ethical and spiritual attributes essential to higher religion'.¹⁶⁸ In that context Farnell contrasted Egyptian nature-worship with the transcendental conception of God in Judaism and Christianity.¹⁶⁹ However, in his eyes, Greek religion as well clearly possessed 'the ethical and spiritual attributes essential to higher religion' which religions based on nature-worship might allegedly lack. We may recall in this context that for Farnell the spread of Oriental sun-worship in the Greek world in Greco-Roman times 'must have been judged [by the race-consciousness of the Hellenes] to be a regress towards a barbaric past'.¹⁷⁰

It should be mentioned, however, that if Farnell regarded the transcendental conception of the divine as loftier, he also stated in *The Attributes*: 'Yet we have lost something by this aloofness of our Hebraic and Christian God from the immediate world of nature around us; we have lost the old Pagan sense of the divinity of those things on which our physical life depends and some of the *joie de vivre* that goes with that sense.'¹⁷¹ Written at a late stage in Farnell's

¹⁶⁶ Farnell (1911), p. 9, cf. Farnell (1911), pp. 40–1.

¹⁶⁷ Farnell (1925), p. 105. Cf. 'many nature-deities are hard to moralize and discipline [*sic*].' Farnell (1925), p. 68.

¹⁶⁸ Farnell (1925), pp. 105, 117.

¹⁶⁹ Farnell (1925), p. 117.

¹⁷⁰ Farnell (1911), pp. 9–10.

¹⁷¹ Farnell (1925), p. 117. A comparison may be drawn with Th. Zielinski's *The Religion of Ancient Greece* which appeared in English one year after Farnell's *Attributes* in 1926. In a chapter on 'the Deification of Nature', Zielinski compared the religious

life, *The Attributes* indicates a frustration at the loss of the feeling of the holiness of nature in the wake of technological progress. Recalling the diatribes of Ruskin or Symonds against the pernicious effects of Victorian industrialism and urbanization, Farnell regretted that the triumph of industrialism had resulted in the 'overlaying of the beauty and healthful purity of our world of nature with ugliness, noise and dirt'.¹⁷² Among its most lamentable effects was that it had 'half-destroyed two most beautiful world-cities, Oxford and Athens'.¹⁷³ Farnell further deplored the prospect of 'modernism' working its way even into secluded Delphi: if it were to happen, the sanctity of the place would be destroyed, 'for no divinity can survive the atheistic blight of the motor'.¹⁷⁴

Farnell may have launched, as we saw, a fierce attack on physical interpretations of the major Greek gods, yet he underscored that Greek religion also populated the natural world with lesser divine figures. In contrast to other religions in which nature-powers tended to be conceived as demonic beings, in the case of Greek religion these 'had been idealized, humanized, and made beautiful after the type of such forms as Linos, Hyakinthos, Kore, and the "Nymphs"'.¹⁷⁵ Farnell suggested that 'our poetic intuition of nature, one of the most delightful inheritances of our spirit, owes a deep debt to a primitive animism, purified and transformed by Greek polytheism'.¹⁷⁶ From Chaucer and

attitude towards nature in ancient Greece to that encountered in the poetry of Lermontov. Noting that in his 'When the yellowing meadow waveth' Lermontov did not only celebrate nature, but also turned his attention to 'God in the heavens', Zielinski remarked: 'Here one feels the poison [sic] introduced by Judaism into Christianity, and through it into the souls of the heirs of Hellenism.' Th. Zielinski, *The Religion of Ancient Greece. An Outline* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), p. 16.

¹⁷² Farnell (1925), pp. 117–18. As we saw, Farnell also characteristically stated 'we look back often yearningly to the freedom, freshness, and simplicity of the nomadic pastoral life' Farnell (1925), p. 110.

¹⁷³ Farnell (1934), p. 177.

¹⁷⁴ Farnell (1934), p. 190. The same apprehension comes across in a passage in Farnell's autobiography which shows him paying homage to Arcadia: 'It is my vision of Arcadia that among all the dream-pictures collected for me by youthful travel I would like to recall . . . for beauty and charm I should place it above any region of Europe that I had then or have since travelled through. I feel no certainty that its charm still remains; it may have "developed" and lost its spell.' Farnell (1934), p. 238. One may compare Dodds' reaction to the sighting of an airplane on Helvellyn in 1926: 'For me that machine was an outrage on the sanctity of Nature and a harbinger of many desecrations to come.' E.R. Dodds, *Missing Persons. An Autobiography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 94.

¹⁷⁵ Farnell (1925), p. 72.

¹⁷⁶ Farnell (1925), p. 73.

Shakespeare to Wordsworth and Keats, poets, he maintained, 'are found continually drawing on this Pagan religion as they give voice to the beauty and charm of the world of nature'.¹⁷⁷ Thus, although Farnell played an instrumental part in the eclipse of the physical interpretation of the major Greek gods, in the *Attributes* he joined their advocates in expressing appreciation for the attitude towards nature allegedly suggested by the worship of minor Greek deities and in arguing for its kinship to contemporary nature-poetry. To this extent Farnell's *Attributes* can be seen, like the writings of advocates of physical interpretations, as an example of how the sense of alienation from nature affected the view and attraction of Greek religion during the period. It should be remembered, however, that in crucial contrast to scholars in the physical tradition, Farnell did not see in Greek mythology admirable nature-poetry, but rather immorality, which had to be dissociated from Greek religion; and that the main tendency in his work was to celebrate the non-elemental conception of the major Greek gods.

Farnell's rejection of physical in favour of ethical interpretations resulted in a view of Greek religion as eminently humano-centric and, by his standards, as more advanced. He argued that, by the time one first encountered them, the Greek gods were personal divinities 'who may happen to reside in a certain sphere of nature and administer the laws of that sphere, but ha[ve] a real complicated existence independent of it and not wholly to be explained in reference to the laws of it'.¹⁷⁸ 'In the clear light of Greek religion', Farnell argued, Greek religious personages 'appeared as ethical ideal figures'.¹⁷⁹ Athena was neither to be seen as a goddess of the aether with Welcker, nor as a goddess of the dawn with Max Müller, nor as a cloud-goddess with Roscher: her character was rather 'the reflex of the civilized Hellenic polity'.¹⁸⁰ In the hieros gamos of Zeus and Hera, which for Welcker was never wholly divested of its symbolism as the

¹⁷⁷ Farnell (1925), p. 73.

¹⁷⁸ Farnell (1896a), p. 5. What Farnell says here is very close to Nägelsbach and may be a further example of unacknowledged German influence: 'er [the Greek] sich Götter schafft, die nicht bloß in, sondern über der Natur stehn und, ohne den Zuständen und Kräften derselben verhaftet zu sein, ein selbstständiges Leben führen' and '... [hat sich] jeder Grieche in seinem Zeus, seiner Athene, seinem Apollon eine vollkommen freie Persönlichkeit gedacht, die zwar in einem bestimmten Gebiete wirkt, auf dieses Gebiet aber in ihrem Thun und Treiben keineswegs beschränkt ist'. C.F. Nägelsbach, *Die nachhomerische Theologie des griechischen Volksglaubens bis auf Alexander* (Nürnberg: Gieger, 1857), pp. 96, 97–8.

¹⁷⁹ Farnell (1896a), p. 7.

¹⁸⁰ Farnell (1896a), pp. 7, 318.

marriage of Heaven with Earth, Farnell argued that 'we see rather the reflection of human life, than of the life of nature; and at last it would seem to have become little more than a symbol of ordinary marriage' and so forth.¹⁸¹ In view of the fact that Farnell's rejection of physical interpretations went hand in hand with his praise of the ethical character of Greek religion, it is arguable that he was inclined to overlook or to deny physical aspects even when less implausible.

Thus to return to Farnell's account of Apollo, thorough as his review of the sources and of the arguments adduced by proponents of the solar interpretation was, it left certain points concerning Apollo's alleged relation to the sun open or undiscussed. For example, Farnell appears to have ruled out rather too cursorily the possibility of any solar aspect in the myths about Apollo's periodic departures. Moreover, as we saw, for Welcker, Apollo's representation in art in the company of the Hours and his title *Ὠρομέδων* suggested that he was entrusted with the function of the ordering of time and was indicative of a solar association. Arguably this aspect merits more attention than Farnell gave it. Likewise, Farnell did not engage with Roscher's suggestion that the dates of Apolline festivals and sacred days were associated with the ordering of time. He confined himself to noting that Apollo was unique among the Greek gods in having titles deriving from the calendar like *Hebdomagetis* or *Neomenios* and stated that 'no satisfactory explanation, astronomical or other, has been suggested for these facts'.¹⁸² Apollo's relation with time and its potential association with the sun are issues that would be worth revisiting in current scholarship.

If Apollo was not to be seen as a solar deity, one may ask what alternative interpretation, if any, Farnell had to offer. With respect to the question of his geographical origins, Farnell rejected the theory that Apollo's worship derived from the Near East as it had most recently been claimed by Wilamowitz. Instead, he inclined to the view that Apollo was an Aryan god who had arrived in Greece from the North.¹⁸³ As we have seen, etymology played a prominent part in the interpretation of the Greek gods throughout the nineteenth century. Farnell dismissed all proposed etymologies of Apollo's name as unworthy of discussion except one: the one connecting it to the Dorian *apella*.¹⁸⁴ 'The importance of the theory,' he maintained, 'is

¹⁸¹ Farnell (1896a), p. 192.

¹⁸² Farnell (1907a), p. 259.

¹⁸³ Farnell (1907a), pp. 98–9.

¹⁸⁴ Farnell (1907a), pp. 98–9. As will be seen, this etymology was revived by Burkert.

that it would prove the political character of Apollo to have been his from the beginning.' Farnell argued, however, that the forms 'Apollon'/'Apellon' could not have arisen from *apella*, although he conceded they may have shared a common root.¹⁸⁵ More importantly, in a passage that illustrates the impact of anthropology on his view of the origins of the Greek gods, Farnell asserted that 'we shall [also] find reason for supposing that the aboriginal Apollo had more to do with wolves and boars than with political meetings'.¹⁸⁶ In his account of Apollo Farnell partly drew on anthropology to advance an interpretation that starkly contrasted with the interpretations of the champions of the solar Apollo. Aspects of Apollo which for scholars in the physical tradition were hallmark traits of a solar deity pointed for Farnell to a 'primitive' past. Thus he conjectured that the bow 'may have marked the divinity of the tribes who lived mainly by the chase'. Recalling Lang's account of Apollo Smintheus, he further suggested that in the case of Apollo Lykeios, 'we are very possibly confronted here with a remnant of direct animal-worship (or half-worship), upon which the cult of a higher god is engrafted'.¹⁸⁷ However, as we mentioned, Farnell did not share the anthropologists' emphasis on the origins of the Greek gods. More important, in his eyes, was that 'probably at the beginning of his Hellenic career, and certainly by the time he arrived at Athens, he [Apollo] had shaken off most of his savagery'.¹⁸⁸ According to Farnell, from very early on, Apollo, like the other major gods, appeared to be endowed with a complex aggregate of functions—an agrarian, an oracular, a political and so forth, no single one of them emerging as a core function. As we have seen, for advocates of the view that Apollo had by origin been a solar deity, his origins provided the link between his various functions. It may then also be asked in what way, if any, Farnell attempted to make sense of Apollo's functions. In his review of Roscher's *Lexikon* in 1888, Farnell, in opposition to the method of deducing all aspects of a deity from a single *Grundbedeutung*, put forward the view that 'certain qualities and functions become as it were mechanically ascribed to the deity, as these derive importance from the growing culture or special habits of the nations among whom his worship is prominent'.¹⁸⁹ In

¹⁸⁵ Farnell (1907a), p. 99.

¹⁸⁶ Farnell (1907a), p. 99.

¹⁸⁷ Farnell (1907a), pp. 112, 115.

¹⁸⁸ Farnell (1907a), p. 113.

¹⁸⁹ Farnell (1888a), p. 135. One may compare in current scholarship the 'snowball theory of the Greek gods, the idea that as a god rolls down through history it picks up

the *Cults*, again in opposition to the ‘method prevalent in the German interpretation of myths’, he mentioned the theory of ‘local “contagion” or assimilation’ according to which a deity could “catch”, inherit, or usurp’ aspects of another deity.¹⁹⁰ These theories would appear to preclude the possibility of finding a unifying theme in the various functions of a deity and Farnell certainly refrained from suggesting all-explaining answers. This is not to say, however, that, in his eyes, there was no logic at all in the allocation of divine functions. Thus he maintained that ‘the oracle-god was naturally regarded also as a healer’ or that the oracular and the musical function were combined, as prophetic and poetic inspiration were thought to be akin.¹⁹¹

Lastly, in his discussion of Apollo Farnell stated that ‘currents of mystic speculation, coming partly from the East, and bringing new problems concerning the providence of the world and the destiny of the soul, scarcely touched and in no way transformed the personality of Apollo. A Panhellenic god, he survived almost down to the close of paganism as *a brilliant and clearly-outlined figure of the genuinely national religion* [my emphasis].’¹⁹² The rejection of the solar interpretation of Apollo, his dissociation from ‘Oriental’ mysticism, the notion that his was a brilliant and clearly outlined conception and that he belonged to the ‘genuinely national religion’, all these points recall K.O. Müller’s portrayal of Apollo in *Die Dorier*.

Both for scholars in the physical tradition and for advocates of the historical-critical approach, if for different reasons, Apollo represented the noblest figure of the Greek pantheon. According to Farnell, Apollo was ‘certainly the brightest creation of polytheism’ and his worship deserved praise for its role in the organization of the social and political life of the Greeks. In his eyes, ‘its unique achievement was that through it, more than through any other ancient worship, the intellectual life and the work of the thinker and the artist were consecrated to God.’¹⁹³ Nevertheless, in a passage that sheds light on his own Christianizing preferences, he stated: ‘It [Apolline cult] may

new functions and powers that need not cohere with its original nature or with one another’ Parker (2011), p. 86.

¹⁹⁰ L.R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896b), p. 511.

¹⁹¹ Farnell (1907a), pp. 233, 244–5.

¹⁹² Farnell (1907a), p. 98.

¹⁹³ Farnell (1907a), pp. 98, 153, 252.

not, indeed, present us with the highest achievement of the Hellenic spirit in religious speculation: for instance, to trace the gradual evolution of ideas that made for monotheism, we must turn rather to the worship of Zeus.¹⁹⁴

III.II. Elements of Monotheism in Greek Religion

In examining the issue of monotheistic elements in Greek religion, Farnell dealt cursorily with the question of *Urmonotheismus*. He granted that the earliest worship of Zeus as of the other Greek gods may have been without images. However, he emphasized that this was due to 'want of imagination and helplessness of hand rather than the piety that Clemens claims for the Pelasgians'.¹⁹⁵ He further dismissed Welcker's theory of Zeus Kronion as 'born of false philology, a misleading theological bias, and an ignorance of what is really primitive in ancient religion'.¹⁹⁶ Farnell took issue with theories of 'primitive monotheism' in general. This brought him into collision, among others, with his anthropological mentor, Lang. Farnell argued against Lang that 'we can hardly credit the mind of primitive man with a faculty for grasping the idea of one deity of the world'.¹⁹⁷

Farnell engaged at greater length with the question of how far Zeus' 'supremacy and predominance introduces a principle of order or a monotheistic tendency into the Greek polytheism'.¹⁹⁸ He suggested that the answer varied, depending on whether one took into consideration evidence from cult or literature. In his view, it was possible to discern 'beneath the bewildering mass of cults and legends a certain vague tendency that makes for monotheism, a certain fusion of persons in one, namely, Zeus'.¹⁹⁹ He emphasized that this tendency was distinguishable from philosophical conceptions of Zeus and that it should be seen as reflecting popular religion. According to Farnell, this 'germ of monotheism that had not vitality enough to develop itself' was observable in the tendency to conceive Zeus as the ruler of

¹⁹⁴ Farnell (1907a), p. 98. For these reasons the statement that 'Farnell especially emphasized the service of the cult of Apollo', Turner (1981), p. 130, seems to me misleading.

¹⁹⁵ Farnell (1896a), p. 102.

¹⁹⁶ Farnell (1896a), p. 23.

¹⁹⁷ Farnell (1925), p. 65.

¹⁹⁸ Farnell (1896a), p. 83.

¹⁹⁹ Farnell (1896a), p. 47.

the entire natural world through identification with other gods. Thus he called attention to the point that, in addition to being conceived as the ruler of the sky, Zeus was conceived as the ruler of the sea through his identification with Poseidon as Zeus Enalios and as the ruler of the underworld through his identification with Hades; and further that as Georgos and Karpodotes, Zeus had his jurisdiction extended over crops.²⁰⁰ Farnell underscored, however, that 'Zeus becomes the supreme but never the sole god in the physical universe'.²⁰¹ Moreover, despite his stress on Zeus' supremacy, he did not go so far as to portray him, as, for example, Preller had done, as the focal point of Greek polytheism. Thus he suggested that though 'theoretically Zeus was admitted to be the highest god, yet we may believe Athena counted more than he for the Athenians, and Hera more for the Argives'.²⁰²

At a further level, Farnell argued, like Welcker and Preller, that in cult 'the multiplicity of the Greek polytheism is modified by the tendency to group and classify divinities'.²⁰³ However, he did not press that argument either as far as they had done. Thus in a passage that neatly illustrates his tendency to reject symbolical or allegorical interpretations of Greek religion in favour of rational or practical, he dismissed any suggestion that the group of the twelve gods expressed 'any esoteric idea of any complex unity of godhead corresponding to a unity observed in nature'. Instead, he maintained that it had probably emerged out of the convenience of grouping together the worship of the major Greek gods. He further played down its overall significance for Greek religion emphasizing that it was a comparatively late phenomenon and that it did not include major gods like Dionysos or the deities of the underworld.²⁰⁴ By contrast, he laid stress on the grouping together of Zeus, Athena and Apollo. In a passage that highlights his moral perspective, Farnell claimed that 'no other divinities were so important for Greek life and thought as these, who were specially called "the guardians of the moral law"'.²⁰⁵ In addition, Farnell called attention to the grouping together of gods on the basis of identity or similarity of character and function like the groups of the two or three Fates or the two or three Graces. He suggested that, to that extent, one was entitled to speak of unity in the Greek divine

²⁰⁰ Farnell (1896a), pp. 47, 84.

²⁰² Farnell (1909b), p. 18.

²⁰⁴ Farnell (1896a), pp. 84–5.

²⁰¹ Farnell (1896a), p. 48.

²⁰³ Farnell (1896a), p. 84.

²⁰⁵ Farnell (1896a), p. 85.

world. However, Farnell ultimately undermined the force of the argument from divine groups, which, as we have seen, had played an important part in the case that Welcker and Preller made for a monotheistic tendency in Greek religion: 'Further than this,' he argued, 'we cannot claim unity for Greek polytheistic cult, which shows quite as much tendency to multiply as to combine forms.'²⁰⁶

As far as Zeus' portrayal in literature was concerned, however, Farnell cited approvingly Welcker's point that Zeus was 'not only a god among other gods, but also God solely and abstractedly'. He reiterated Welcker's observation that the words 'Zeus' and 'theos' could be used as synonyms in the Homeric epics and called attention to the sublime conception of Zeus in lyric poetry and the tragedians. However, he stated, 'we are not obliged to see in this any trace of a primitive monotheistic idea, as Welcker would; it may be a later development, due to the increased power of abstract thought.'²⁰⁷ Furthermore, Farnell argued, 'at most it amounts not to monotheism but "henotheism"—if a very awkward term may be used to denote the exaltation of one figure in the polytheism till it overshadows without supplanting or abolishing the others.'²⁰⁸ Lastly, he underscored that, as in the case of philosophical thought, in the few cases in Greek literature in which one could speak of a genuinely monotheistic conception of the divine, there was no impact on popular religion, 'which went a different path from that followed by the poets and philosophers'.²⁰⁹ Farnell's overall stance, then, was one urging caution against any strong thesis for monotheism, let alone for *Urmonotheismus*. In the treatment of this issue as well, Farnell can be seen as standing with the one foot in the nineteenth century while moving forward into the twentieth century with the other. On the one hand, he firmly rejected theories of Greek *Urmonotheismus*. On the other

²⁰⁶ Farnell (1896a), p. 85.

²⁰⁷ Farnell (1896a), pp. 85–6.

²⁰⁸ Farnell (1896a), p. 86. If ultimately indebted to Max Müller, Farnell's argument for henotheism in Greek religion recalls Rohde's. In *Die Religion der Griechen*, Rohde categorically rejected theories of *Urmonotheismus*. He did suggest, however, that one could observe instances of henotheism: 'Selbst im Cultus, in dem er [the Greek] sich stets an einzelne, bestimmt mit Eigennamen benannte Götter wendet, kann er in seiner Vorstellung von dem Einzelgott, den er verehrt, weit über die Grenze des Sonderamtes, das etwa sonst diesem Gotte zugestanden wird, alle Fülle göttlicher Macht und Segenskraft vereinigen, so dass ihm der Eine momentan statt Aller gilt. Von solchem "Henotheismus"—der durchaus nicht gleich Monotheismus ist—zeigen sich in griechischer Litteratur Beispiele genug'. Rohde (1895), p. 10.

²⁰⁹ Farnell (1896a), p. 86.

hand, his view that monotheistic aspects represented the highest achievement of the Greeks in the area of religion,²¹⁰ even if he regarded them as the outcome of progress in religious thought rather than as a remnant of *Urmonotheismus*, bears witness to the enduring Christianizing influence that had dominated the debate in the nineteenth century and before.

In dealing a decisive blow to physical interpretations, the spearhead of which was his large-scale criticism of their seemingly most securely established example, namely the solar Apollo; in arguing against the search for origins and in questioning the reliability of arguments from etymology, Farnell's work showed ways out of some of the impasses that much of earlier nineteenth-century scholarship had found itself confronted with and lastingly influenced the study of the Greek gods in the twentieth century. It may be the case that Farnell's work cannot really claim originality on each or even on any of these points. Even so, the methodical application of all of them in a laborious five-volume examination of the official worship of the Greek gods constituted an original feat in its own right which monumentalized the change of direction in turn-of-the-century scholarship.²¹¹

IV. ANTHROPOLOGY, SOCIOLOGY AND THE RETURN OF PHYSICAL INTERPRETATION: JANE ELLEN HARRISON (1850–1928)

At the same time that Farnell was cautiously balancing his way between old and new in Oxford, in Cambridge Harrison was responding in a

²¹⁰ It should be noted that, although Farnell regarded monotheism as the more advanced religious form, he was, as we saw, also quite appreciative of certain aspects of polytheism such as its *joie de vivre* or its alleged tolerance: see ch. 3 'Polytheism and Monotheism', Farnell (1925), pp. 64–101.

²¹¹ In his *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece* Vernant called attention to the difficulties surrounding the efforts to discover the origins of the Greek gods and the use of arguments from etymology. Moreover, he combated physical interpretations: J.-P. Vernant, *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece* (London: Methuen, 1980), pp. 92–3. By the time Vernant was writing, physical interpretations had long declined in scholarship, as he appears to acknowledge himself: 'The study of religions today is sufficiently advanced for no specialist still to be convinced by such simple naturalistic explanations. So, in attacking them I perhaps appear to be pushing at doors that are already wide open.' Vernant (1980), pp. 93–4.

more subversive way to the new context for the study of Greek religion that the emergence of anthropology and sociology were creating in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries.

J.E. Harrison is among the first and, is certainly the best-known, of the increasing number of female students of Greek religion in Britain, but also elsewhere in Europe and the United States, in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries.²¹² Jane Ellen Harrison was born in Yorkshire in 1850. After her mother's death soon after her birth, her father, a timber merchant, married his daughter's governess.²¹³ Harrison received a strict religious education from her step-mother, a Welsh Evangelical 'of the fervent semi-revivalist type'.²¹⁴ When she was seventeen she attended the recently founded Cheltenham Ladies College which she finished with a first-class certificate in a range of subjects from Holy Scripture to French and German.²¹⁵ Looking back at the development of her religious views in *Alpha and Omega* (1915) Harrison stated that after her Low Church upbringing she went through a phase of 'Broad Churchism'. By the time she entered Newnham College, Cambridge to study Classics at twenty four, being one of the first female students,²¹⁶ she was a 'complete Agnostic'.²¹⁷ In the same essay she further stated, 'I know myself by temperament to be deeply, perhaps almost insanelly, religious', but also, 'I avow myself a deeply religious Atheist'.²¹⁸ Harrison's friends told of

²¹² The early 1910s, for example, saw, besides the appearance of Harrison's own works, e.g. Florence Mary Bennet's *Religious Cults Associated with Amazons* (1912), Mary Hamilton Swindler's *Cretan Elements in the Cult and Ritual of Apollo* (1913) and Gladys Davis' *The Asiatic Dionysos* (1914). Eva Cornelia Wunderlich, a student of Deubner and Kern, wrote *Die Bedeutung der roten Farbe im Kultus der Griechen und Römer* (1925).

²¹³ Robinson (2002), pp. 14, 21.

²¹⁴ Harrison (1925), p. 19 quoted in R. Schlesier, 'Jane Ellen Harrison', in Calder/Briggs (1990), pp. 127–41 at p. 128. Cf. H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Jane Ellen Harrison, 1850–1928', in E. Shils/C. Blacker (eds.), *Cambridge Women. Twelve Portraits* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 29–72 at p. 30.

²¹⁵ Robinson (2002), pp. 24–9.

²¹⁶ J.G. Stewart, *Jane Ellen Harrison, a Portrait from Letters* (London: Merlin, 1959), p. 1.

²¹⁷ Harrison (1915), p. 184. On Harrison's religious upbringing see Harrison (1925), pp. 17–22. On the development of Harrison's religious views see S.J. Peacock, 'An Awful Warmth About Her Heart: the Personal in Jane Harrison's Ideas on Religion', in Calder (1991), pp. 167–84 at pp. 172–6. Robinson stresses the role of Harrison's reading of Strauss' *Life of Jesus* in her rejection of Christianity: Robinson (2002), p. 30.

²¹⁸ Harrison (1915), pp. 206–7.

her that she was 'by nature rotten with superstition and mysticism' and she gave them right.²¹⁹ As will be seen, Harrison's later writings indicate an affirmation of the role of emotion in religion and of mysticism. After completing her studies at Cambridge (1874–79), Harrison moved to London where she remained until 1898. In the course of her stay there, she had the opportunity to study Greek vase-paintings at the British Museum and also wrote and lectured on classical art. Moreover, she became acquainted with scholars like Walter Pater and Andrew Lang.²²⁰ Harrison also travelled extensively on the Continent making archaeological trips to Italy and Greece and visiting archaeological collections in Germany.²²¹ Like Farnell, she met eminent German archaeologists such as Curtius and Brunn. In her *Reminiscences of a Student's Life* (1925), she stated that 'all my archaeology was taught me by Germans'.²²² In 1898 Harrison was appointed Research Fellow at her old college at Cambridge where she stayed until 1922. During her stay in Cambridge, she formed close friendships and collaborated with F.M. Cornford (1874–1943) and A.B. Cook (1868–1952).²²³ These scholars have often been seen as forming a group, the so-called 'Cambridge ritualists'.²²⁴ The work of Harrison on Greece spans more than forty years from her first book, *Myths of the Odyssey in Art and Literature* (1882), to *Myths of Greece and Rome* (1927). The main focus of Harrison's early writings was on art. Like Farnell, she would gradually move from Greek art to Greek religion.²²⁵

Harrison's first book, *Myths of the Odyssey in Art and Literature*, displays a conventional idealizing tendency. Use of anthropological comparative material was made, but the purpose of most of the comparisons seems to have been to highlight the uniqueness of the Greeks. This is most clearly visible in Harrison's account of the myth of Circe.²²⁶

²¹⁹ Stewart (1959), p. 38.

²²⁰ Robinson (2002), pp. 60, 67, 72.

²²¹ Robinson (2002), pp. 60–4.

²²² Harrison (1925), p. 64, Robinson (2002), pp. 61–3.

²²³ Robinson (2002), p. 124ff.

²²⁴ The Oxonian Gilbert Murray (1866–1957) is usually regarded as a further member: R. Ackerman, 'The Cambridge Group: Origins and Composition', in Calder (1991), pp. 1–19. On the problems with positing a group of 'Cambridge Ritualists' see Stray (1998), p. 161, n. 57, M. Beard, *The Invention of Jane Harrison* (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 109–28, Wheeler-Barclay (2010), p. 216.

²²⁵ In *Alpha and Omega*, Harrison stated 'I became slowly aware that what I really was interested in was, not Greek art, but Greek religion' (1915), p. 185.

²²⁶ Cf. Robinson (2002), p. 66.

Harrison maintained that stories about a witch living in a forest were observable in the traditions of many cultures. Yet 'only the Greek poet has availed to soften the repulsive features of the story, and lend to the evil enchantress the grace and dignity of a mighty and beautiful goddess. It is perhaps in the treatment of such folk-lore as this,—the common *stock* at least, if not the common *heritage* of many peoples,—that the unique genius of the Greek is most clearly seen. What he touches, he transfigures.'²²⁷ Conversely, anything suggestive of 'primitiveness' in Greek religion appears to have been a cause of embarrassment. Thus the ghosts' demand for blood in the account of Odysseus' descent into Hades in the *Odyssey* occasioned the following apologetic comment: 'we note, almost with regret, how again and again, this ritual point, the drinking of the dark blood, is emphasised. This Nekyia, this "Book of the Dead," is, we are obliged to own, if not "steeped" yet at least tinged "with the Animism of barbarous peoples".'²²⁸ The mention of animism indicates the influence of Tylor, but, at this early stage, Harrison refrained from drawing the full implications of the notion of 'primitive' survivals in Greek religion.

Harrison's second book, *Introductory Studies in Greek Art* (1885), opened with a statement attesting to the broad appeal that the search for origins had in contemporary scholarship: 'We seek with a new-won earnestness to know the genesis, the *origines* of whatever we study.'²²⁹ In the same work, she emphasized that 'if ever we are to touch the hidden springs of Greek genius, to understand its secret, incommunicable character, its hidden essence, it will be surely now, in its first beginnings'.²³⁰ As we shall see, the interest in origins remained a primary concern of Harrison's throughout her career.²³¹ This issue

²²⁷ J.E. Harrison, *Myths of the Odyssey in Art and Literature* (London: Rivingtons, 1882), p. 63.

²²⁸ Harrison (1882), p. 114.

²²⁹ J.E. Harrison, *Introductory Studies in Greek Art* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1885), p. 1.

²³⁰ Harrison (1885), p. 136. Cf. 'In our quest of knowledge concerning the mind of Greece it is above all things necessary we should study the beginnings of their religious thought, get as near to the fountain-head as we may.' J.E. Harrison, 'Preface' in *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens. Being a Translation of a Portion of the 'Attica' of Pausanias by Margaret de G. Verall with Introductory Essay and Archaeological Commentary by Jane E. Harrison* (London: Macmillan, 1890), pp. i–xiv at p. xi.

²³¹ R. Schlesier, 'Prolegomena to Jane Harrison's Interpretation of Ancient Greek Religion', in Calder (1991), pp. 185–226 at pp. 197–8, Schlesier (1994), pp. 158–60.

provides one of the major areas of contrast between Harrison and Farnell. In her review of the fifth volume of the *Cults*, Harrison strongly criticized Farnell for refusing to address the question of origins: 'when it comes to what he [the anthropologist] chiefly seeks, the question of *origines*, he will find this question tabued. In his first volume, Dr Farnell writes, "The question of origins may be set aside." Those words were written in 1896, and may then have been felt by some to constitute a wise limitation. Now, with full flood of the comparative method upon us, they can only be felt as a perilous entrenchment.'²³² We may note that if to anthropologists 'the question of *origines*' remained central, for Farnell, as we saw, students of Greek religion were well-advised to concentrate on the study of the historical period.

In *Introductory Studies in Greek Art* the idealizing tendency is more accentuated than in *Myths of the Odyssey in Art and Literature*. In the context of describing Athens' victory over Persia, for example, Harrison referred to the Athenians as 'this chosen race, the finest the world has ever seen'.²³³ She further stated of Greece in connection with its artistic accomplishments that it was 'alone untouched by time, vital for ever' in contrast to Egypt, Assyria and Phoenicia which were 'dead'.²³⁴ Moreover, although she conceded early Eastern influences, Harrison emphasized that 'Greek art in its spirit, its essence, is autochthonous, home-born'.²³⁵ Thus at the time Harrison remained committed to a conventional, sharp differentiation between Greece and its Near Eastern neighbours. The idealization of Greek art was accompanied by an idealization of Greek religion. Thus Harrison extolled Greek anthropomorphism as opposed to Egyptian theriomorphism or the hybrid figures of Chaldaeo-Assyrian religion.²³⁶ Anthropomorphic representations of the gods may not have been an exclusively Greek phenomenon as the religion of the Phoenicians showed. However, 'the human-formed gods of the Phoenicians never attained to beauty'.²³⁷ Harrison underscored that 'it was reserved to the Greeks to see clearly two things: first, that the only fitting form in which the gods could be embodied was the most beautiful of known forms; second, that this most beautiful of forms was the human form'.²³⁸

²³² J.E. Harrison, 'Reviews. Greece: Religion', *Man*, 10 (12–13), 1910a, pp. 30–1 at p. 30.

²³³ Harrison (1885), p. 198.

²³⁴ Harrison (1885), p. v. Cf. Wheeler-Barclay (2010), p. 225.

²³⁵ Harrison (1885), p. 145.

²³⁶ Harrison (1885), pp. 176–7.

²³⁷ Harrison (1885), p. 127.

²³⁸ Harrison (1885), p. 177.

Harrison acknowledged that the Greek representation of the divine had not displayed a perfected anthropomorphism from the beginning. Thus she saw relics from earlier, less developed stages in Pausanias' reports about 'strange *xoana* . . . worshipped with obscure and superstitious rites, sometimes of degrading character'.²³⁹ Furthermore, she suggested that myths involving the transformation of gods into animals provided evidence for animal worship in the distant past. She argued, however, that these non-anthropomorphic beginnings made all the more praiseworthy the Greek accomplishment: 'but this "seamy side" of Greek religion, undeniable as it is, serves only to point more emphatically its generally beautiful and human character. When we consider to what a flood of Oriental contagion of hideous forms and still more horrid practices the Greeks were exposed, we wonder only that they remained so steadfastly devoted to the pure and the beautiful, that they threaded their way in art, as in religion, so delicately through such a mire-stained region.'²⁴⁰ Again, we see Harrison partaking in the depreciative discourse on the 'Orient' that had been influential in Western classical scholarship at least since the time of Voss. As in the case of her predecessors, the contrast between the Greeks and the 'Orientals' did not lack contemporary implications. Throughout *Introductory Studies* Harrison laid stress on the antithesis between the Greeks and the civilizations of the East, on the former's love of beauty as opposed to the latter's propensity to deformity. The Athenian defeat of Persia she hailed as 'the triumph of law over license, of light against darkness, of knowledge against ignorance'.²⁴¹ Following in a long tradition, Harrison portrayed the Greek wars with the Persians in terms of a perennial opposition between the West and the East. Thus she spoke of 'that great and ancient East which ever and again has stood in conflict and contrast with the younger civilizations of the West'.²⁴²

To go back to Harrison's view of anthropomorphism, only one small aside slightly upset her celebration of it in *Introductory Studies*. In her discussion of Praxiteles, Harrison maintained that 'anthropomorphism *could* go no further, perhaps it never ought to go so far'.²⁴³

²³⁹ Harrison (1885), p. 179.

²⁴⁰ Harrison (1885), pp. 179–80. Cf. S.J. Peacock, *Jane Elie Harrison. The Mask and the Self* (New Haven / London: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 185.

²⁴¹ Harrison (1885), p. 198.

²⁴² Harrison (1885), p. 44.

²⁴³ Harrison (1885), p. 254.

Apollo Sauroktonos or Aphrodite entering her bath appeared too young or too gentle to inspire the awe associated with divinity. As we shall see, in the course of her career, Harrison's reservations about anthropomorphism deepened into outright hostility. In *Introductory Studies*, however, the general tone remained one of idealization.

In *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens* (1890) there is a marked change. In the preface, Harrison stated that she would follow in the footsteps of Eusebius, Lobeck, Mannhardt, and Lang (putting together a quite heterogeneous group) 'in regarding the myth-making Greek as a practical savage rather than a poet or philosopher'.²⁴⁴ This change has tended to be attributed to the influence of the art-critic D.S. MacColl (1859–1948) who criticized Harrison for holding second-hand opinions and introduced her to the work of Mannhardt.²⁴⁵ Already in 1888 Harrison recommended to her students to read Lang's *Myth, Ritual and Religion*.²⁴⁶ As will be seen, Harrison's 'conversion' to anthropology would ultimately lead to a highly different view of Greek religion from Farnell's. Harrison's introductory essay on 'The mythology of Athenian local cults' is teeming with comparisons drawn from anthropological material intended this time to bring out the similarities between Greeks and 'primitive' peoples. Furthermore, under the influence of Lang, Harrison argued for traces of totemism in Athens. Thus in the context of describing the Lykeion she maintained that 'we seem to be in a very nest of totemistic reminiscence'. Moreover, she suggested that Apollo Lykeios should be seen as a wolf-god: 'at first the god is the animal itself; then its protector; then, as civilisation advances, its slayer; and last, when the connection with the wolf becomes intolerable to the advanced and cultured mythologist, Apollo Lykeios (Apollo the wolf) becomes by a false etymology Apollo the light god.' Close by, she further argued, there was 'Herakles the dog' (Kynadas). 'A little farther is the deme of Alopekae, where the fox-men dwell.'²⁴⁷ As we shall see, Harrison would work out more fully the theory that there had been a totemistic stage in Greek prehistory in *Themis*. The anthropological exploration of the 'primitive' layers of Greek religion which drew on comparative

²⁴⁴ Harrison (1890), p. iii.

²⁴⁵ Robinson (2002), pp. 85–9, Beard (2000), p. 90.

²⁴⁶ Robinson (2002), p. 78. ²⁴⁷ Harrison (1890), pp. 219–20.

data may be seen as a parallel to the contemporary archaeological discoveries of Schliemann and later of Evans which brought to light the pre-classical Mycenaean and Minoan civilizations.²⁴⁸

Harrison's use of anthropological principles and data in *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens* did not prevent her from expressing reservations about anthropology—or 'the Folk-lore Method' as she referred to it—two years later in her preface (*Addressed to Teachers of Mythology.—May be omitted by Elementary Students* [sic]) to Dr Petiscus' *The Gods of Olympos* (1892). Although she stated 'most of us now recognize the substantial soundness of the position', she also maintained there that 'we see clearly its inadequacy as applied to Greek mythology. It leaves us with the beginning of things, with certain primitive elementary conceptions, and takes no heed of the complex structure reared on the simple basis. The seductive simplicity of the "Corn-mother" and the "Tree-spirit," and, worst of all, the ever-impending "Totem" is almost as perilous as the old Sun and Moon snare.'²⁴⁹ These words of caution regarding the emphasis on origins and the dangers of the excessive use of anthropological concepts seem at variance with the views that Harrison set out in *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens* and her earlier works and stand in stark contrast to her persistent interest in origins and her later glowing appraisal of the contribution of anthropology to the study of Greek religion. As we saw, in her *Reminiscences of a Student's Life* (1925) Harrison stated: 'we Hellenists were, in truth, at that time, a "people who sat in darkness", but we were soon to see a great light, two great lights—archaeology, anthropology. Classics were turning in their long sleep. Old men began to see visions, young men to dream dreams. I had just left Cambridge when Schliemann began to dig at Troy. Among my own contemporaries was J.G. Frazer, who was soon to light the dark wood of savage superstition with a gleam from *The Golden Bough*.'²⁵⁰ Despite Lang's advocacy of anthropology in the British public sphere during the 1880s, for Harrison in 1892, the preface to a popular handbook intended for teachers, but also accessible to students, was apparently not an

²⁴⁸ Turner (1981), p. 123, Marchand (1996), p. 122.

²⁴⁹ J.E. Harrison, 'Preface', A.H. Petiscus, *The Gods of Olympos or Mythology of the Greeks and Romans* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1892), pp. v–ix at p. vi. Cf. Robinson (2002), p. 113.

²⁵⁰ Harrison (1925), pp. 82–3. Cf. Turner (1981), pp. 115–16, Despland (1974), pp. 119–20.

appropriate place for espousing anthropology without substantial qualification.²⁵¹

To go back to *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens*, under the influence of Sir A.C. Lyall's (1835–1911) account of Indian religion in *Asiatic Studies* (1882), Harrison put forward a view of Greek religion which challenged the centrality of the Olympian gods: 'the twelve orthodox Olympian gods have so imposed themselves upon our modern imagination that it is perhaps only those who, like Sir Charles [*sic*] Lyall in India, have watched mythology in the making who can realise a classical world peopled, not by the stately and plastic figures of Zeus, Hera, Artemis, Apollo, Athene, and Hephaistos, but by a motley gathering of demi-gods and deified saints, household gods, tribal gods, local gods, and can note how these live on as an undercurrent even after the regular hierarchy, with its fixed attributes and definite departments, has been superimposed by some dominant system.'²⁵² On the analogy with a living religion, then, Greek religion was no longer conceived in terms of the harmonious Olympian world, but rather as a fluid multi-layered conglomerate of partially conflicting cults with local variants.

Harrison's challenge to the centrality of the Olympians would be more pronounced in her *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (1903). An important background to the *Prolegomena* provides Harrison's encounter with E. Rohde's *Psyche* (1890, 1894). One of the best-known works of nineteenth-century scholarship on Greek religion, *Psyche* was widely praised for its exemplary use of anthropological material to explore aspects of non-Homeric Greek religion. In *Psyche*, Rohde put forward a study of the Greek worship of souls and the belief in human immortality. Under the influence of Tylor's theory of animism, Rohde argued that the worship of souls was a primordial feature of Greek religion. He suggested that its apparent absence from the oldest literary source, Homer, was misleading. A thorough analysis of the Homeric poems indicated traces of soul worship which Homeric 'rationalism' had been unable to fully suppress. In addition, Rohde emphasized that the worship of Chthonian gods constituted a major feature of the post-Homeric religious landscape. Chthonian gods, in his view, were not novel creations of the post-Homeric age, but rather went back to the distant past of Greek

²⁵¹ Cf. Beard (2000), p. 123.

²⁵² Harrison (1890), p. iv. Cf. Turner (1981), p. 123.

religion.²⁵³ Rohde laid stress on the point that Chthonian gods were local gods. In his view, they were, in fact, 'the most authentic local gods, the true gods of homeland'.²⁵⁴ He further argued that in certain Greek festivals one could discern a superimposition of the worship of an Olympian god on the worship of an older Chthonian deity. Thus he maintained that the combination of cheerful and abject rituals at the Hyakinthia indicated that the cheerful worship of Apollo had been incompletely superimposed on the abject worship of Hyakinthos. Moreover, he asserted that the rituals addressed to Hyakinthos offered insight into his 'real nature': he was a daemon with Chthonian affinities, a deity older at Amyklai than Apollo.²⁵⁵ In the second part of *Psyche* Rohde undertook an examination of the Greek belief in human immortality. He argued that the view that the human soul was immortal was alien to the religion of the Olympians, which stressed the divide between the immortal gods and mortals. By contrast, together with the aspiration to union with godhead, it lay at the core of the worship of Dionysos. For Rohde, these two elements were typical features of mysticism.²⁵⁶ Rohde described the emergence of the worship of Dionysos in Greece in terms of an alien intrusion. In his view, it had originated in 'primitive' Thrace whence it swept across Greece 'like an epidemic', its 'barbaric' orgiastic excesses starkly contrasting to the ordered worship of the Olympian gods.²⁵⁷ In his *Religion der Griechen* he stated that mysticism was 'an alien blood-drop in Greek blood'.²⁵⁸

Rohde's emphasis on the worship of Dionysos marked a reaction to the perceived tendency to focus primarily on the Olympians and especially on Apollo in contemporary scholarship. As we have seen, in a letter to Nietzsche in 1871 the young Rohde expressed his loathing of the stereotype of Greek *Heiterkeit* and argued that Dionysos had

²⁵³ E. Rohde, *Psyche. Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen* (Freiburg i.B./Leipzig: Mohr, 1894), pp. 11ff., 190.

²⁵⁴ Rohde (1894), p. 190.

²⁵⁵ Rohde (1894), pp. 130–1. One may compare Schömann's view that 'Von der Verschmelzung des Alten mit dem Neuen kann der Apollocult in Lakonien ein Beispiel geben, indem hier der dorisische Lichtgott mit dem alleinheimischen Naturgott in den Hyakinthien und Karneen identificirt wurde.' Schömann II (1859), p. 152.

²⁵⁶ Rohde (1894), pp. 296ff., 318.

²⁵⁷ Rohde (1894), pp. 327ff.

²⁵⁸ Rohde (1895), p. 27. How far Rohde's portrayal of the worship of Dionysos was indebted to his fellow student and friend, F. Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872) is an object of debate: M.S. Silk and J.P. Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 126–7.

been just as influential in Greece as Apollo: 'how I hate this deathly Göttingen wisdom about the "Heiterkeit of pure Greekness". Dionysos had just as much of a profound influence as the enlightened Apollo of Göttingen'. Rohde added that the Greeks had never stooped to the 'flat, modern, optimistic view of the "self-explanatory nature" of the world and human affairs'.²⁵⁹ It is sometimes suggested that later Rohde revised his position and assumed a negative view of Dionysiac mysticism. Thus McGinty maintains: 'the mature Rohde remained true to the prevailing German vision of Greece as a civilization of moderation, nobility and rationality and therefore regarded Dionysos as a bane on Hellenism'.²⁶⁰ However, it should be stressed that for all his emphasis on the wild, non-Greek character of Dionysiac worship in *Psyche*, Rohde also stated there that it was easier for 'our inner sympathy' to access its emotional surge than the opposite 'Apollinian' pole of Greek religion.²⁶¹ The theme that the ecstatic worship of Dionysos was closer to modern religious sensibilities than the ordered worship of the Olympians which was emphasized in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century scholarship attests to the attraction that mysticism and the irrational exercised in the period.²⁶²

Harrison reviewed both volumes of *Psyche*. She commented approvingly on the view that Homer did not represent the first stages of Greek religion: 'he [Rohde] is well aware—and this constitutes the peculiar value of his monograph [as we have seen, this point had actually been made repeatedly long before Rohde's *Psyche*]—that the Homeric poems are in reality for mythology no starting-point'.²⁶³ She further welcomed the insight that belief in immortality and the

²⁵⁹ Quoted in Crusius (1902), p. 55.

²⁶⁰ P. McGinty, *Interpretation and Dionysos. Method in the Study of a God* (The Hague: Mouton, 1978), p. 69, cf. p. 205.

²⁶¹ 'Wollen wir die Wahrheit gestehen, so ist unserem innerlichen Mitempfinden schwerer fast als solches Ueberwallen der Empfindung und alles ihm Verwandte der entgegengesetzte Pol griechischen religiösen Lebens zugänglich, die in ruhiges Maass gefasste Gelassenheit, mit der Herz und Blick sich zu den Vorbildern alles Lebens, den Göttern, und ihrer, wie der Aether unbewegt leuchtenden Heiterkeit erhebt': Rohde (1894), pp. 297–8.

²⁶² Turner (1981), p. 127, Aurnhammer/Pittrof (2002), p. 2.

²⁶³ J.E. Harrison, Review of E. Rohde's *Psyche. Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen*, *The Classical Review* IV, 1890, pp. 376–7 at p. 376. Rather ungenerously she went on to state 'it is in his clear recognition of the principle of the Homeric *break*, rather than in any special novelty of either fact or theory, that Herr Rohde claims our gratitude. We have only to regret that he tells his story at such needless length and with such tedious iteration.' Harrison (1890), p. 376.

prospect of union with god were central to the worship of Dionysos yet absent from Olympian religion. The lack of these aspects made her question how genuinely religious the latter was: 'this tenet [the belief in the immortality of the soul], the touchstone of any religion worth the name, the keystone of spirituality, was the main doctrine of the religion of—Bacchus... The keynotes of his religion are two, *ecstasy* and its correlative *askesis*—its end and aim one, absolute communion, even identity with the divinity worshipped, and *thereby*—in the only possible way—attainment of eternal life.' By contrast, 'no worshipper of Athene or Apollo or Hera seeks to be made one with his god.'²⁶⁴ These themes would play a prominent part in Harrison's later major writings.²⁶⁵

To go back to Harrison's *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (1903), as the title indicates, its focus was on religion rather than art. As Farnell had done several years earlier in the first volume of his *Cults*, Harrison claimed in her introduction to the *Prolegomena* that the predominant tendency in popular, and even in specialist works on Greek religion was to approach their subject in terms of mythology and 'moreover of mythology as seen through the medium of literature'. Displaying the influence of Robertson Smith's views on ritual, she stressed that 'the first preliminary to any scientific understanding of Greek religion is a minute examination of its ritual'.²⁶⁶ 'In England,' she further contended, 'so far as I am aware, no serious attempt has been made to examine Greek ritual',²⁶⁷ an assertion which belittled not only the work of Farnell, but also of Campbell.

²⁶⁴ J.E. Harrison, Review of Rohde's *Psyche. Part II*, *The Classical Review* VIII, 1894, pp. 165–6 at p. 165.

²⁶⁵ Robinson (2002), pp. 111–12, Schlesier (1994), p. 130.

²⁶⁶ J.E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), p. vii. Already in 1891 Harrison had stated 'The conviction has slowly grown up in my mind that, in seeking for the significance of a mythological figure, the only fruitful method is to examine the cultus. Rites and ceremonies are the facts, and are of amazing permanence; myths are the professed explanation of these facts, and shift and vary with the mental development of generations of worshippers.' Harrison (1891), pp. 350–1. In the introduction to the *Prolegomena*, Harrison asserted '... the facts of ritual are more easy definitely to ascertain, more permanent, and *at least equally* [my emphasis] significant'. Harrison (1903), p. vii. For a discussion of Harrison's views on myth and ritual see Csapo (2005), pp. 155–61.

²⁶⁷ Harrison (1903), p. vii. We should note, however, that, despite her increasing focus on ritual from the 1890s onwards Harrison also authored popular handbooks on Greek mythology to the end of her life.

According to Harrison, the tendency to approach Greek religion via the medium of literature had led to the erroneous assumption that religion as portrayed in the earliest literary source, Homer, represented the earliest form of Greek religion. Harrison argued, however, that 'the Olympians of Homer are no more primitive than his hexameters'.²⁶⁸ Recalling the argumentation of Rohde, she claimed that Homer had either overlooked or suppressed religious notions associated with evil and purification which resurfaced in later periods. The examination of 'this substratum of religious conceptions, at once more primitive and more permanent' would be her aim in *Prolegomena*.²⁶⁹ Lloyd-Jones suggests that to segments of the English public as yet unfamiliar with the work of German scholars such as Rohde, Harrison's focus on a 'primitive layer' of Greek religion older than Homer 'will have come as a revelation'.²⁷⁰ However, as we have seen, the 'primitive' aspects of Greek religion had received ample attention already in the writings of Lang in the 1880s.

In *Prolegomena* Harrison advanced an extreme version of the Olympian/Chthonian contrast. In her first chapter on 'Olympian and Chthonic ritual', she argued that one could discern in Greece of the classical period two distinct forms of worship each with its own rituals. On the one hand, there were the rituals addressed to the perfectly anthropomorphic gods of Olympus. In this context, the worshippers were supposed to offer service or *therapeia* to the gods by performing sacrifices in which they shared the sacrificial meal with them. On their side, the gods were normally expected to grant the worshippers' requests. Thus a kind of *do ut des* principle regulated their relationship. As we have seen, H.D. Müller and Preller, if in different ways, had challenged the stereotype of Olympian *Heiterkeit*. Although familiar with the work of both, Harrison reproduced that stereotype, maintaining that Olympian worship was characterized by a 'rational and quite cheerful mutual confidence', all signs of anxiety and fear such as feelings of atonement and the need for purification being absent.²⁷¹ Fear, however, lay at the root of the worship of the Chthonian gods which existed side by side with that of the Olympian gods. Chthonian worship involved rituals based on the principle *do ut abeas* such as holocaust sacrifice.²⁷² The apotropaic rituals were

²⁶⁸ Harrison (1903), p. vii.

²⁶⁹ Harrison (1903), p. vii.

²⁷⁰ Lloyd-Jones (1996), p. 41.

²⁷¹ Harrison (1903), pp. 3–4.

²⁷² Harrison (1903), pp. viii–ix, 7–10.

addressed not to 'rational, human, law-abiding gods, but vague, irrational, mainly malevolent δαίμονες, spirit-things, ghosts and bogeys and the like, not yet formulated and enclosed into god-head'.²⁷³ Ample illustrations from Greek vase-paintings showed the various forms that these demonic beings could assume. Like Rohde, Harrison argued for the vitality and pervasiveness of Chthonian religion in the classical period. In fact, she subversively maintained that it was the 'real religion of the main bulk of the people in the sixth and even the fifth century, a religion not of cheerful tendance but of fear and deprecation'.²⁷⁴ In a further parallel to Rohde, Harrison argued that many 'ostensibly Olympian' festivals like the Diasia, the Thargelia or the Anthesteria had been superimposed on Chthonian worships.

If the Supreme God Zeus Kronion epitomizes Welcker's conception of Greek religion, Harrison's work is (in)famous for its account of Zeus Meilichios. Harrison stressed that at the festival of the Diasia which was supposedly in honour of Zeus Meilichios, the main ritual involved a sacrifice 'made over entirely to the god, unshared by the worshipper'. In her view, the apotropaic nature of the ritual indicated 'not that Zeus the Olympian has "an underworld aspect"; it is the cruder fact that he of the upper air . . . extrudes an ancient serpent-demon of the lower world'. According to Harrison, 'the cult of the Olympian Zeus has overlaid the cult of a being called Meilichios, a being who was figured as a snake'.²⁷⁵

²⁷³ Harrison (1903), p. 7.

²⁷⁴ Harrison (1903), p. 7.

²⁷⁵ Harrison (1903), pp. 12ff, 19–20, 28. In her later *Primitive Athens*, Harrison partly revised her view of Meilichios. She there accepted Foucart's theory (which she had rejected in the *Prolegomena*) that Meilichios was 'but the Graecized form of Melek, the "King" best known to us as Moloch, a deity who like the Greek Meilichios loved holocausts, a deity harsh and stern, who could only by a helpless and hopelessly mistaken etymology be called Meilichios the Gentle One. His worship prevailed in the Peiraeus, brought thither probably by Phenician sailors.' J.E. Harrison, *Primitive Athens as Described by Thucydides* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906), p. 79. As regards the ethos of the celebrations at Greek festivals we may note the contrast between Harrison and Campbell. The latter suggested that in many cases, as in the Diasia, the Plynteria, or the Thargelia 'there was at least one day of fasting and gloom . . . But it is not the less true that joyousness was the most prominent feature of all these celebrations' Campbell (1898), p. 218. In his eyes, the mixed nature of the celebrations reflected the complex nature of the Greek gods. Thus he argued that in festivals like the Thargelia and the Pyanepsia Apollo was worshipped as 'the god of healing and of pestilence, of fruitfulness and blight.' Campbell (1898), p. 221.

As we have seen, for earlier scholars like Welcker or Curtius, the Olympian gods and especially Zeus and Apollo attested to the profound religious feeling of the Greeks. For Harrison, they were hardly religious. She emphasized that in Olympian religion: 'none of the deeper problems of what we moderns call religion are even touched: there is no question of sin, repentance, sacrificial atonement, purification, no fear of judgment to come, no longing after a future complete beatitude.'²⁷⁶ She dismissed the Olympian gods as creations of art devoid of genuine religious content: 'these perfect Olympians...are lovely dreams, they are playthings of his happy childhood, and when full-grown he comes to face realities, from kindly sentiment he lets them lie unburied in the lumber-room of his life.'²⁷⁷ In her view, the religious emptiness of the Olympian gods became even more glaring when they were contrasted to Dionysos and the Orphic gods: 'just when Apollo, Artemis, Athene, nay even Zeus himself, were losing touch with life and reality, fading and dying of their own luminous perfection, there came into Greece a new religious impulse, an impulse really religious, the mysticism that is embodied for us in the two names Dionysos and Orpheus.'²⁷⁸ For Harrison, the absence of mysticism from Olympian religion was largely to be attributed to the anthropomorphic representations of the Olympian gods: 'we are apt to regard the advance to anthropomorphism as necessarily a clear religious gain. A gain it is in so far as a certain element of barbarity is softened or extruded, but with this gain comes loss, the loss of the element of formless, monstrous mystery.' She maintained that the ram-headed Knem of the Egyptians is 'to the mystic more religious than any of the beautiful divine humanities of the Greek'.²⁷⁹ This is some way from her praise of Greek anthropomorphism and disapproval of the 'monstrosity' of Oriental religious forms in her *Introductory Studies* and reverses the conventional celebration of the

²⁷⁶ Harrison (1903), p. 3. One may draw a parallel with Nietzsche's view of the Olympians: 'Wer, mit einer anderen Religion im Herzen, an diese Olympier herantritt und nun nach sittlicher Höhe, ja Heiligkeit, nach unleiblicher Vergeistigung, nach erbarmungsvollen Liebesblicken bei ihnen sucht, der wird unmuthig und enttäuscht ihnen bald den Rücken kehren müssen. Hier erinnert nichts an Askese, Geistigkeit und Pflicht.' Nietzsche (1872), p. 11.

²⁷⁷ Harrison (1903), p. 364.

²⁷⁸ Harrison (1903), pp. 364–5. Cf. 'In the fifth century B.C. the puppet-show of the Olympians was well-nigh played out, but the two gods of the Orphics remained potent'. Harrison (1903), p. xi.

²⁷⁹ Harrison (1903), p. 258. Cf. Schlesier (1991), p. 204.

formal clarity of the Greek representation of the divine as opposed to the mystical conceptions of 'Oriental' religions. Conversely, Harrison played down the anthropomorphism of Dionysos and the Orphic gods, referring to the former as the Bull-god and to Phanes as 'polymorphic, a beast-mystery-god'.²⁸⁰

Both in her dismissal of the religious significance of the Olympian gods and in her favour of Dionysiac and Orphic mysticism Harrison's projection of her own religious views is transparent. In her preface to *Themis*, she herself would state, 'the human mind is not made in water-tight compartments. What we think about Greek religion affects what we think about everything else.'²⁸¹ In this context, it should be stressed that Harrison espoused the view we have encountered in earlier scholarship that, in contrast to the other Greek gods who had largely abandoned the stage of nature-gods, the (Thracian) Dionysos was, or rather remained a nature-god.²⁸² 'With Dionysos, god of trees and plants as well as human life, there came a "return to nature," a breaking of bonds and limitations and crystallizations, a desire for the life rather of the emotions than of the reason, a recrudescence it may be of animal passions.'²⁸³ As we have seen, for certain earlier scholars the advent of Dionysos to Greece was comparable to the spread of a dangerous epidemic while Welcker celebrated the Greek progression from nature towards culture. By contrast, Harrison, under the influence of Nietzsche, did not conceal her attraction to a 'return to nature' which, in her eyes, Dionysos' worship stood for: 'This notion of a return to nature is an element in the worship of Dionysos so simple, so moving and in a sense so modern that we realize it without effort.'²⁸⁴ We have seen how the longing for proximity with nature infused physical interpretations of the Greek gods in both German and British scholarship during the

²⁸⁰ Harrison (1903), pp. 651–2.

²⁸¹ Harrison (1912), p. xviii. Robinson (2002), pp. 9, 112. Cf. Turner (1981), p. 127.

²⁸² 'Long before the coming of Dionysos the Greeks had nature-gods: they had Demeter goddess of the corn, they had Poseidon Phytalmios of the growth of plants, they had the Charites givers of all increase. But it should be distinctly noted that all these and many another nature-god had passed into a state of complete anthropomorphism.' Harrison (1903), p. 445.

²⁸³ Harrison (1903), p. 445. Cf. Peacock (1988), p. 190.

²⁸⁴ Harrison (1903), pp. 446–7. In so stating, Harrison referred to Nietzsche's contrast between Apollo and Dionysos in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, which she called 'beautiful and profoundly true.' Harrison (1903), p. 446, n. 4. Dionysiac intoxication, however, did not gain her sympathy: Harrison (1903), p. 447.

nineteenth century. With the decline of physical interpretations, this longing for nature found no longer expression in the treatment of the major Olympian gods, but in the treatment of lesser divinities like the Nymphs in the case of Farnell, or of Dionysos in the case of Harrison.

Harrison further celebrated the religion of Orpheus, proclaiming that it is 'religious in the sense that it is the worship of the real mysteries of life, of potencies (*δαίμονες*) rather than personal gods (*θεοί*); it is the worship of life itself in its supreme mysteries of ecstasy and love' and further that 'the last word in ancient Greek religion was said by the Orphics'.²⁸⁵ Harrison called 'the beautiful figure' of Orpheus 'strangely modern' and ended the *Prolegomena* explicitly stating that 'then, as now, we have, for one side of the picture, a revived and intensified spirituality, an ardent, even ecstatic enthusiasm, a high and self-conscious standard of moral conduct, a deliberate simplicity of life; abstinence from many things, temperance in all, a great quiet of demeanour, a marvelous gentleness to all living things. And for the reverse, we have formalism, faddism, priggishness, a constant, and it would seem inevitable lapse into arid symbolism, pseudo-science, pseudo-philosophy, the ignorant revival of obsolete rites, the exhibition of all manner of ignoble thaumaturgy and squalid credulity'.²⁸⁶ Thus Harrison's account of Dionysos and of the gods of Orphism became intertwined with a criticism of the sterility and hypocrisy of formal religion and culture in contemporary British society and with an affirmation of mysticism.²⁸⁷ In this respect as well, Harrison's *Prolegomena* offers a British parallel to the writings of Nietzsche and Rohde. As we mentioned, Harrison's positive view and emphasis on the Orphics stands in stark contrast to Farnell's or Wilamowitz's lack of taste for them.

Neither the Chthonian gods nor Dionysos nor ritual can be said to have been overlooked in earlier scholarship on Greek religion, British or Continental. However, Harrison's *Prolegomena* combined flamboyant rhetoric with breadth of scope and lavish illustrations to make one of the most extreme and emphatic calls in the history of the discipline to place the focus on these aspects.

Harrison advanced even more radical claims in *Themis. A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (1912). As the title suggests, *Themis* bears the influence of sociology and especially of E. Durkheim's

²⁸⁵ Harrison (1903), pp. 658–9.

²⁸⁷ Cf. Robinson (2002), p. 9.

²⁸⁶ Harrison (1903), p. 659.

(1858–1917) view of religion as a reflection of collective feeling and thinking.²⁸⁸ In *Themis* Harrison drew attention to the Hymn to the Greatest Kouros, discovered at Palaikastro in Crete in 1904.²⁸⁹ In her view, despite its late age, the hymn embodied ‘very early material, material indeed so primitive that we seem at last to get back to the very beginnings of Greek religion’.²⁹⁰ According to Harrison, Zeus’ invocation as Greatest Kouros by a group of Kouretes suggested that he was to be seen as a projection of themselves, expressing group unity.²⁹¹ Drawing on A. Van Gennep’s *Les Rites de Passage* (1909), she further argued that the hymn provided evidence for rituals of initiation. ‘The Kouretes,’ she held, ‘are Young Men who have been initiated themselves and will initiate others, will instruct them in tribal duties and tribal dances.’²⁹² For Harrison, ‘tribal initiation was the prototype of all social rites.’²⁹³ Greek initiation rituals had long attracted attention.²⁹⁴ However, in the work of Harrison construed as rites of passage they were placed in the foreground as a fundamental social and religious phenomenon.²⁹⁵ In large part due to the stimuli provided by her work the theme of initiation has played a prominent part in the study of Greek religion to the present day. Harrison further held that there was a close parallel between the Kouretes and the thiasos of Dionysos.²⁹⁶ In her view, Dionysos was ‘but his thiasos incarnate’.²⁹⁷ Harrison

²⁸⁸ Harrison (1912), p. ix. Robinson (2002), p. 224. In her *Epilegomena*, Harrison would state: ‘The discovery of its social origin is perhaps the greatest advance yet made in the scientific study of religion.’ J.E. Harrison, *Epilegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), p. 6.

²⁸⁹ Csapo (2005), pp. 147–8. On the hymn see further P.J. Perlman, ‘Invocatio and Imprecatio: The Hymn to the Greatest Kouros from Palaikastro and the Oath in Ancient Crete’, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 115, 1995, pp. 161–7.

²⁹⁰ Harrison (1912), p. 1.

²⁹¹ Harrison (1912), p. x. Cf. Versnel (1990a), p. 33. In an example of the difference between Harrison’s sociological approach and the agrarian interpretations inspired by anthropology, Nilsson would argue regarding the Palaikastro hymn that ‘the belief in Nature daemons conferring bliss and fertility fully accounts for the ideas expressed in this remarkable composition’. M.P. Nilsson, *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and its Survival in Greek Religion* (Lund: Gleerup, 1927), p. 477.

²⁹² Harrison (1912), p. 19.

²⁹³ Harrison (1912), p. 511.

²⁹⁴ On the history of the interest in initiation in modern scholarship on Greek religion see F. Graf, ‘Initiation. A Concept with a Troubled History’, in D.B. Dodd/C.A. Faraone (eds.), *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives* (London/New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 3–24, Versnel (1994), pp. 48–74.

²⁹⁵ Cf. Graf (1993), p. 41.

²⁹⁶ Harrison (1912), p. 30.

²⁹⁷ Harrison (1912), p. 38. Cf. ‘The Kouros stands for the unity of the Kouretes, the Bacchos for the thiasos of Bacchoi.’ Harrison (1912), pp. x, xi. Cf. Versnel (1990a), pp. 32–3.

extended this interpretation to other male figures of Greek religion. Thus she maintained that Apollo, 'like Dionysos, like Herakles, is the arch-ephebos, the Megistos Kouros'. Unconvinced by Farnell's objections, she further associated Apollo with the 'apellaia', the 'offerings made at puberty initiation'. 'Apellaaios,' Harrison suggested, 'is the month of these rites and these offerings, Apellon is the projection of these rites.'²⁹⁸ This view of Apollo would be highly influential in later scholarship.²⁹⁹ As we shall see, however, this was not Harrison's last word on Apollo. To go back to Dionysos, in Harrison's opinion, Dionysiac rites such as the omophagia derived from a distant totemistic past.³⁰⁰ Harrison followed Frazer's definition of Totemism as 'an intimate relation which is supposed to exist between a group of kindred people on the one side and a species of natural or artificial objects on the other side, which objects are called the totems of the human group'.³⁰¹ Harrison stressed the social aspect of totemism: 'first and foremost [then] in totemism is the idea of the unity of a group'.³⁰² Harrison further argued that gods had originally been unknown in totemism. In fact, she launched a broader attack on conventional definitions of religion as entailing 'some notion of a relation of the human soul to a god'.³⁰³ Harrison agreed with Durkheim's view that the notion of divinity rather than being fundamental to religious life was but a secondary episode.³⁰⁴ In her later *Epilegomena*, she reiterated that 'the idea of a god is a bye-product arising out of rites and sanctities, a bye-product of high importance but non-essential'.³⁰⁵ The subversive implications of this view not only for the study of the religions of antiquity, but also for Christianity were abundantly clear. In *Alpha and Omega*, Harrison emphasized that 'Gods and theology are always, I believe, a temporary phase, always perforce fabricated, and only

²⁹⁸ Harrison (1912), p. 441. Cf. Versnel (1994), pp. 57–8.

²⁹⁹ Versnel (1994), pp. 57–8, 314. ³⁰⁰ Harrison (1912), pp. 118–19.

³⁰¹ Harrison (1912), p. 119.

³⁰² Harrison (1912), p. 120.

³⁰³ Harrison (1912), p. 488. Harrison cited as an example A. Réville's definition in his *Prolegomènes à l'Histoire des Religions* (1881).

³⁰⁴ Harrison (1912), p. 488.

³⁰⁵ Harrison (1921), p. 6. Cf. 'We must face at the outset the fact that religion does not presuppose a god.' Harrison (1921), p. 5. We may observe the stark contrast with Wilamowitz on the relation between god and cult. As Kern noted, Wilamowitz 'lehnt die Gleichsetzung von Kult und Glauben ab. Erst ist der Gott, der Daimon da. Dann entsteht aus dem Glauben an ihn der Kult.' Kern (1938), p. 316. In *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, Wilamowitz emphasized 'Den Glauben suchen wir, der den Gott erschaffen hat; Name und Kult kommen erst nachher'. Wilamowitz (1931), p. 137.

to be broken'.³⁰⁶ To go back to *Themis*, Harrison asserted that 'The worshippers, or rather the social agents, are prior to the god. The ritual act . . . is prior to the divinity'.³⁰⁷ The hitherto privileged role of god(s) in the study of religion was thus radically challenged: collective emotion and ritual was what was primary, god(s) was/were an epiphenomenon.³⁰⁸ As we have mentioned, this redirection of scholarly emphasis from the gods onto ritual and social aspects was one of the most significant developments in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century scholarship.³⁰⁹ It is especially interesting, therefore, to note that later in her career Harrison expressed some second thoughts about the shift in focus which her work had helped induce. Thus in 1915 she remarked, 'we were all busy—over-busy perhaps—with Mana, magic, double-axes, horns of consecration, wild bulls, woodpeckers; in a word, with *ritual* and obscure sanctities rather than with anthropomorphic divinities and theology'.³¹⁰ It is also worth observing that she likewise stated of initiation that 'a great light is always blinding, and new truth festers quickly into old dogma. There were not wanting signs that the "King-god" and the "Initiation Ceremony" were becoming obsessions'.³¹¹

According to Harrison, instead of full-blown personal gods, early humans conceived of vague daemons, for which she coined the term *Eniautos-Daimon*. The *Eniautos-Daimon* provides an illustration of the encounter of classical scholarship with anthropology and sociology that *Themis* represents. At a first level, the function of the *Eniautos-Daimon* was 'to give food and increase to man and make the year go round' which it fulfilled by going through a cycle of death and revival.³¹² In this respect, Harrison acknowledged that the *Eniautos-Daimon* had predecessors in the concepts of the Tree-, Corn- and Vegetation-Spirits that appeared in the writings of Mannhardt and Frazer. She argued, however, that 'a word was wanted that should include not only vegetation, but the whole world-process of decay, death, renewal'.³¹³ She later clarified that '*I am using a new class-name, because I am grouping together a new set of qualities which characterise a particular stage in divine development. I am not*

³⁰⁶ Harrison (1915), p. 196.

³⁰⁷ Harrison (1912), p. 29. Cf. Harrison (1912), p. 136.

³⁰⁸ Cf. Robinson (2002), p. 224.

³⁰⁹ Henrichs (1987), pp. 14–15.

³¹⁰ J.E. Harrison, 'Greek Religion and Mythology', *The Year's Work in Classical Studies* 1915 (London, 1916), pp. 71–80 at p. 72. Cf. Robinson (2002), p. 271.

³¹¹ Harrison (1916), p. 72.

³¹² Harrison (1912), pp. 467–8.

³¹³ Harrison (1912), p. xiii. Cf. Robinson (2002), p. 227.

asserting the existence of a new false god [as she was misunderstood by some].³¹⁴ At a further level, the *Eniautos-Daimon* represented the life and unity of the group, its ritual being 'substantially the same as the ceremony of death and resurrection enacted as a rite of tribal initiation'.³¹⁵ Harrison held that the Greek gods emerged gradually out of *Eniautoi-Daimones*. In the preface to the second edition of *Themis*, she maintained that the *Eniautos-Daimon* lay 'behind each and every primitive god'.³¹⁶

It is striking that in her account of the *Eniautos-Daimon* and of the Greek gods in *Themis* (and not only there) Harrison reproduced some of the wilder hypotheses of the old physical interpretations. Thus she stated of the *Eniautoi-Daimones* that 'the type and model of them all is the old hard-working Helios'.³¹⁷ According to Harrison, the Olympian gods had distanced themselves from their origins as *Eniautoi-Daimones* so utterly that 'an Olympian is in fact in the main the negation of an *Eniautos-daimon*'.³¹⁸ No longer vague demons, but clearly defined, individual personalities, the Olympian gods were endowed with the attribute of immortality and thus broke free from the cycle of death and rebirth typical of the ritual of the *Eniautoi-Daimones* and their close bonds with the natural world.³¹⁹ For Harrison, this development, which several of her predecessors and contemporaries praised, was largely regrettable.³²⁰ We saw how earlier scholars like Welcker celebrated the myth of the fight of Zeus and the Olympians against the Titans as symbolic of the victory of the new

³¹⁴ J.E. Harrison, 'Greek Religion and Mythology', in S. Gaselee (ed.), *The Year's Work in Classical Studies 1917* (London, 1918), pp. 79–101 at p. 87. For Farnell, it was 'an unnecessary and ugly pseudonym' quoted in Stewart (1959), p. 87. Harrison used the term *Eniautos-Daimon* interchangeably with the term 'Year-God'. To my knowledge she does not refer to H.D. Müller's *Jahresgott*.

³¹⁵ Harrison (1912), pp. xiv–xv. Cf. The *Eniautos-Daimon* was 'at once the representation of the life of the group and the life of nature'. Harrison (1912), pp. xiv–xv.

³¹⁶ J.E. Harrison, *Themis. A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927a), p. vii.

³¹⁷ Harrison (1912), p. 467. Cf. Harrison's stating of the *Eniautos-Daimon*: '... swaddled as he undeniably is in solar affinities.' Harrison (1918), p. 81.

³¹⁸ Harrison (1912), p. 447.

³¹⁹ Harrison (1912), pp. xiv–xv, 445–79. Cf. '[The Olympian god] sheds his animal or plant form.' Harrison (1912), p. 469.

³²⁰ Thus she stated that 'The shedding of plant and animal form marks of course the complete close of anything like totemistic thinking and feeling. It is in many ways pure loss. The totemistic attitude towards animals may, as based on ignorance, beget superstition, but it is full of beautiful courtesies. There are few things uglier than a lack of reverence for animals.' Harrison (1912), pp. 449–50. Cf. Peacock (1988), pp. 200–1.

anthropomorphic gods against elemental powers. In Harrison's eyes, the Titans were sky potencies and sun-gods and, accordingly, she argued that the Titanomachia represented 'the triumph, partial only, of Olympianism over that form of Naturism which is Ouranianism'.³²¹ However, the Olympian victory was not to be unconditionally commended.³²² Moreover, Harrison stressed that 'Side by side with the Olympian movement which tended entirely to humanize the gods, we have [then] a movement of return to Nature-Worship'—this is how she described the rise in the course of the sixth century BC of the religion of the Orphics, which, she suggested, had been influenced by the nature-worship of Persian religion.³²³ As we saw, the older theories of Eastern influences on Greek religion and culture were discredited and vilified in the course of the nineteenth century. Harrison belonged to those scholars who went some way in reviving them. Thus in contrast to Farnell, who regretted the influence of 'Oriental' nature-worship in Hellenistic Greece, Harrison was appreciative of the influence on Orphism of Persian 'Naturism' to which she also attributed the birth of Greek philosophy or 'Ionian Naturism'.³²⁴ However, despite the emphasis which Harrison placed on the dissociation of the Olympian gods from the natural world, she also argued that 'in analysing a god we must look for traits from earth, from "weather", from moon, from sun'. 'For long, perhaps too long,' she asserted, 'scholars have reacted against sun-mythology and moon-mythology.'³²⁵ Once again, one of her primary targets was Farnell.³²⁶ According to Harrison, 'the old error of Naturism was to suppose that sun or moon or dawn or wind exhausted the content of a god. The new truth, born of psychology and sociology, is to recognize that, into the content of every man's experience and

³²¹ Harrison (1912), p. 458.

³²² 'In disallowing the worship of the Heavenly bodies Olympianism did ill.' Harrison (1912), p. 466.

³²³ Harrison (1912), pp. 462–5. In arguing for influences from Persian nature-worship on the Orphics, Harrison drew on Eisler's *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt* (1910).

³²⁴ Harrison (1912), pp. 461–3. In welcoming Persian influences on Greek religion and philosophy (and also art), Harrison undermined the stark contrast that she had drawn in *Introductory Studies* between Greek 'light' and Persian 'darkness'.

³²⁵ Harrison (1912), pp. 390, 392. Cf. 'For long, much too long, scholars have reacted against the mythology of sun and moon' J.E. Harrison, 'The Cults of the Greek States. By L. Richard Farnell. Vol. V', *The Athenaeum* 4301, 1910b, pp. 403–4 at p. 404.

³²⁶ 'Dr. Farnell . . . suffers from a veritable scare as to sun myths', ' . . . we would ask Dr. Farnell to reconsider a prejudice against sun and moon myths—a prejudice once salutary, now obsolete and obstructive.' Harrison (1910b), p. 404.

hence of every man's divinities, enter elements drawn not only from earth but from sun and moon.³²⁷ Thus she argued that 'moon-elements are found in nearly all goddesses and many heroines: in Athena, Artemis, Hekate, Persephone, Bendis; in Antiope, Europa, Pasiphaë, Auge, and a host of others. Sun-elements in Odysseus, Bellerophon, Perseus, Talos, Ixion, Phaethon. Sun and moon symbols are the bull, the golden dog, the Golden Fleece, the Golden Lamb, etc., etc. In fact, if our contention be true, there is scarcely any mythological figure that does not contain sun and moon elements, and scarcely any of which the content is exhausted by sun and moon.'³²⁸ Harrison had also recourse to physical interpretation in her account of Apollo and Dionysos. As we saw, she maintained that Apollo and Dionysos were the 'same' to the extent that they were both Kouroi and Year-Gods. On the other hand, she held that they were 'caught and in part crystallized at different stages of development',³²⁹ Dionysos remaining closer to the stage of *Eniautoi-Daimones*. In a passage that reflects her tendency to draw on ideas from different sources, from Bachofen to Nietzsche, she suggested: 'Apollo has more in him of the Sun and the day, of order and light and reason, Dionysos more of the Earth and the Moon, of the divinity of Night and Dreams. Moreover, Apollo is of man's life, separate from the rest of nature, a purely human accomplishment; Dionysos is of man's life as one with nature, a communion not a segregation.'³³⁰ In fact, in her later writings Harrison largely sought to revive the theory of Apollo's solar origins. It is often noted how

³²⁷ Harrison (1912), p. 390. Cf. Harrison (1910b), p. 404.

³²⁸ Harrison (1912), p. 392, n. 2. Recalling Max Müller's views, Harrison also argued that 'Herakles is a daimon of the Sun-Year' and that 'As the young sun he fights with Hades the setting sun at Pylos. As again the rising sun he rescues Alcestis from the shades.' Harrison (1912), pp. 369–70. Cf. Harrison's suggestion in her revealingly entitled 'Helios-Hades' that 'The *Alcestis* of Euripides, though Euripides knew and cared nothing for such *origines*, is based on a folk-tale with behind it a sun myth; the sun must needs set, Admetus must needs die'. J.E. Harrison, 'Helios-Hades', *The Classical Review* 22, 1908, pp. 12–16 at p. 16.

³²⁹ Harrison (1912), p. 443. The notion that Dionysos represented an earlier stage of development than the other Greek gods also appears in Pater's account of Dionysos in his *Greek Studies* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1895), p. 23. For Pater, 'Dionysus, as we see him in art and poetry, is the projected expression of the ways and dreams of this primitive people, brooder over and harmonised by the energetic Greek imagination' Pater (1895), pp. 22–3. On Pater's view of Dionysos see Henrichs (1984), pp. 237–9.

³³⁰ Harrison (1912), p. 443.

Harrison tended to draw on the latest ideas of her times.³³¹ However, under the influence of Rendel Harris, in *Myths of Greece and Rome* Harrison looked back to the view of the seventeenth-century botanist Nicholas Culpepper that peony was a solar herb to argue that the allegedly related Paeon, and therefore Apollo, had originally a solar significance. Apollo, she maintained, 'assuredly was the sun' just as Artemis 'was the moon'.³³² Harrison's emphasis on the point that criticisms of physical interpretations had gone too far and her repeated, but unsuccessful attempts to largely revive them in *Themis* and her later work are an aspect of her scholarship that has tended to be overlooked. It surely is to be seen in the light of her fascination with the notion of a 'return to nature'. In this context, one may also point to Harrison's fondness of animals and her regret about the eclipse of the reverential attitude towards animals and plants she saw in ancient religions.³³³

To go back to *Themis*, the contrast which Harrison drew between Apollo and Dionysos was part of the broader contrast between Dionysos and the Olympians in her work. As we saw, the fact that, unlike the Olympians, Dionysos was accompanied by a thiasos suggested, according to Harrison, that he continued to represent the projection of collective emotion. Therein, she argued, lay the grounds for the chief difference between Dionysiac religion, with its mystical aspiration to 'union and communion with the god', and the religion of the Olympians, 'the last product of rationalism, of individualistic thinking'.³³⁴ As in *Prolegomena*, Harrison maintained that it was the 'mystery-god' Dionysos who was the object of 'genuine' religious devotion, as opposed to the Olympians.³³⁵ In the introduction to *Themis* Harrison stated that since writing *Prolegomena* 'my sense of the superficiality of Homer's gods had deepened to a conviction that these Olympians were not only non-primitive, but positively in a

³³¹ Most bluntly put by Farnell: 'Miss Harrison appears always to be the victim of and to victimise the last idea that she accepts; she is apt to run the idea to death, or to reduce it to absurdity.' L.R. Farnell, 'Greek Religion and Mythology', in L. Whibley (ed.), *The Year's Work in Classical Studies 1912* (London, 1913b), pp. 59–70 at p. 61.

³³² J.E. Harrison, *Myths of Greece and Rome* (London: Benn, 1927b), p. 41. Cf. her statement that 'The outstanding merit of Dr Rendel Harris's brilliant researches, whether or not we accept his conclusions, is that he gives back to mythologists the Herb-garden they had lost'. Harrison (1918), p. 81, cf. Robinson (2002), p. 275.

³³³ Peacock (1988), pp. 200–1, Wheeler-Barclay (2010), p. 223.

³³⁴ Harrison (1912), p. 48.

³³⁵ Harrison (1912), pp. vii, x.

sense non-religious' and later on she reiterated that 'the gods to whom the worshipper's real heart and life goes out are the gods who work and live, not those who dwell at ease in Olympus'.³³⁶ Harrison herself explicitly linked the Olympian gods thus portrayed to the Christian God. In *Alpha and Omega*, for example, she maintained 'Our god and the Greek gods have through sheer humanity become profoundly *non*-religious. They are of the known quantity'.³³⁷ In *Themis* Harrison stated of the Olympian god that he 'withdraws himself from man and lives remote, a "jealous god"'.³³⁸ We have seen how in the case of devout scholars alleged parallels between the Olympian gods and the Christian God tended to be deliberately emphasized in the context of Christianizing portrayals of Greek religion that ultimately affirmed religion in general. Once more we see Harrison subverting conventions, as in her case the use of such parallels served to undermine Christianity and (a certain form of) religion more broadly. Despite certain gestures which Harrison made towards the Olympians in *Themis* her overall dismissal of them provoked the reaction even of scholars close to her like G. Murray. Thus in the preface to *Four Stages of Greek Religion* he stated: 'She has by now made the title of "Olympian" almost a term of reproach, and thrown down so many a scornful challenge to the canonical gods of Greece, that I have ventured on this attempt to explain their historical

³³⁶ Harrison (1912), pp. vii, 467. Cf. 'My instinct was to condemn the Olympians as *non*-religious, because really the products of art and literature though posing as divinities.' Harrison (1912), pp. vii–viii. Cf. Robinson (2002), p. 221. Stewart reports that 'her lifelong antipathy to these too perfect, magnified humans [the Olympians] became a standing joke': Stewart (1959), p. 31. Despite the strongly anti-Olympian rhetoric, Harrison did not refrain in *Themis* from acknowledging certain contributions of Olympian religion though not necessarily on entirely conventional grounds. Thus, drawing on Murray she maintained that 'This expurgation [from elements exclusively phallic] ranks first and foremost among the services Olympianism rendered to Greece' Harrison (1912), p. 460. On Harrison's offense at phallic elements see Peacock (1988), pp. 205–6. Moreover, although Harrison emphasized in *Themis* that '*The Olympian became an objet d'art*', she also stated 'to the Greek his god, however remote and detached, is never quite a mere cold concept. His Olympian is alive, seen whole, and seen with keen emotion, loved for himself not for the work he does, not merely as a means of living. But it was only to the Greek that the Olympian lived, a great and beautiful reality. Seen through Roman eyes, focused always on action, he became the prettiest and emptiest of toys.' Harrison (1912), pp. 478–9.

³³⁷ Harrison (1915), p. 199. On the parallelism between the Olympians and the Christian God cf. Peacock (1988), p. 199.

³³⁸ Harrison (1912), p. 469.

origin and plead for their religious value.³³⁹ Harrison herself wrote: 'I had often wondered why the Olympians—Apollo, Athena, even Zeus, always vaguely irritated me, and why the mystery gods, their shapes and ritual, Demeter, Dionysus, the cosmic Eros, drew and drew me. I see it now. It is just that these mystery gods represent the supreme golden moment achieved by the Greek, and the Greek only, in his incomparable way . . . Dionysus is a human youth, lovely, with curled hair, but in a moment he is a Wild Bull and a Burning Flame. The beauty and the thrill of it!'³⁴⁰ In the light of Murray's defence, Harrison partly restrained her disdain of the Olympians. In a 1925 letter, she revealingly wrote to him: 'after prayerfully reading your preface [in the translation of the *Libation-bearers*] I am inclined to make it up with old Zeus, but not with Apollo, who remains as ever an ill-mannered prig.'³⁴¹ As in the case of Rohde, the lack of taste for the Olympian gods, and especially for Apollo, and, conversely, the celebration of Dionysos highlight the change from the times of K.O. Müller and Curtius. As Turner observes, Harrison 'in her admiration for the ecstatic . . . was at one with the much younger Edwardian poets and novelists such as Yeats and Lawrence, the latter of whom read her works with much interest'.³⁴² We should note, however, that Harrison was not only the author of *Prolegomena* or *Themis*, but also of popular handbooks on Greek myths in which she adopted much more conventional views on the Olympians including Apollo. In *Myths of Greece and Rome* (1927), for example, she associated Apollo together with Athena with special splendour and beauty, while in *Mythology* (1924) she stated: 'No God is more Greek or perhaps so Greek as Apollo. He stands indeed as the incarnation and utterance of the Greek way of thinking',³⁴³ reproducing conventional ideas about 'Greekness'. The discrepancy between Harrison's specialized and popular writings is perhaps most clear in her *Mythology* of 1924 which she emphatically concluded by invoking Ruskin's

³³⁹ Murray (1912), p. 7. On G. Murray as a scholar of Greek religion see R.L. Fowler, 'Gilbert Murray: Four (Five) Stages of Greek Religion', in Calder (1991), pp. 79–95, Despland (1974), pp. 123–5, Parker (2007).

³⁴⁰ Harrison (1915), pp. 204–5, cf. Harrison (1915), pp. 200–2, Robinson (2011), p. 197.

³⁴¹ Quoted in Stewart (1959), p. 194.

³⁴² Turner (1981), p. 127.

³⁴³ Harrison (1927b), p. 54, J.E. Harrison, *Mythology* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1924), p. 128.

vision of the 'terror-free' Greek which she had criticized in the very beginning of the *Prolegomena* and which she had done so much to undo with her work: 'Ruskin has told us why we need the Greeks: "There is no dread in their hearts; pensiveness, amazement, often deepest grief and desolation, but terror never. Everlasting calm in the presence of all fate, and joy such as they might win, not indeed from perfect beauty but from beauty at perfect rest"',³⁴⁴

To return to Harrison's account of the Olympian gods in *Themis*, in her eyes, the Olympian family was further redolent of patriarchy and female oppression.³⁴⁵ In both *Prolegomena* and *Themis* Harrison maintained that religion should be considered in relation to social structures. In her view, the Olympian gods ruled by Zeus were the reflection of a patriarchal society and Zeus himself a projection of fatherhood.³⁴⁶ She further argued that 'the social structure represented by the Olympians is the same as that of the modern family, it is patrilinear'.³⁴⁷ In the *Prolegomena* Harrison referred to Zeus as 'the archpatriarchal bourgeois'.³⁴⁸ Under the influence of Bachofen's *Mutterrecht* (1861)³⁴⁹ she suggested that Dionysos and his Maenads pointed in the direction of an earlier matrilineal form of social organization, in which, in stark contrast to classical antiquity (and her own times) women had been the foci of society—not as dominant forces, but in view of their role as mothers of tribe members. In her eyes, matrilineal societies represented an early stage in which 'at first the facts of fatherhood were unknown, and later, but little emphasized'.³⁵⁰ In some of her writings Harrison sought to account for the differences between the two social systems in ethnic terms, suggesting that matrilineality was Pelasgian or Minoan as opposed to Northern Indo-European patriarchy.³⁵¹ We have seen the long tradition of male chauvinistic views of Greek religion in nineteenth-century scholarship. In this context as well, Harrison subverted the

³⁴⁴ Harrison (1924), p. 147.

³⁴⁵ Peacock (1991), p. 177, Schlesier (1991), p. 215.

³⁴⁶ Harrison (1912), pp. 490–1. ³⁴⁷ Harrison (1912), p. xvii.

³⁴⁸ Harrison (1903), p. 285, cf. Schlesier (1991), p. 215.

³⁴⁹ On Bachofen's influence on Harrison see Peacock (1988), pp. 186–7.

³⁵⁰ Harrison (1912), pp. xvi, 492–4. On Harrison's view of matriarchy see Schlesier (1991), pp. 213–18, Schlesier (1994), pp. 177–83, Peacock (1988), pp. 179ff., Peacock (1991), pp. 170–1, Robinson (2002), pp. 169–70.

³⁵¹ Thus in *Themis* Harrison stated that Zeus 'as the Father . . . is the projection of northern fatherhood', on the other hand, Hera was 'indigenous and represents a matrilinear system': Harrison (1912), p. 491. Cf. Harrison (1927b), p. 68.

conventional assumptions and value-judgments of her male colleagues. The eventual prevalence of male Olympian order over the earlier matrilineal culture was no positive development, as it had been conventionally seen by those male scholars who accepted the notion of an early period of matrilineality, but rather a setback. Especially after the devastation of the Great War, the contrast between the patriarchal and the matrilineal social systems became emphatically, in Harrison's work, a contrast between an individualistic, military society and a communal, life-affirming one: 'The Homeric patriarchal Olympus reflected and was the outcome of a "heroic" state of society, that is it emphasized rather the individual than the group, it resulted from warlike and migratory conditions. On the other hand the worship of the Mother emphasizes the group, the race and its continuance rather than the prowess of the individual, it focuses on the facts of fertility and the fostering of life.'³⁵² It is notable that Harrison found the worship of the Mother, which she missed in Anglicanism, in Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christianity: 'Our religion teaches us to revere a male Trinity; the figure of the Mother is absent. The Roman and Orthodox churches with a more happy and genial humanism, include the Mother who is also the Maid.'³⁵³ Already in *Themis* she had stated: 'The Roman Church, with her wider humanity, though she cherishes the monastic ideal, yet feels instinctively that a male Trinity is non-natural, and keeps always the figure of the divine Mother.'³⁵⁴ Once again, we see the usual Protestant criticism of the 'pagan' Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches being turned on its head.

According to Farnell, Harrison's *Themis* 'must be called original, not in the sense that it puts new matter before us, but in so far as for the first time it applies with contagious faith and conviction a recent theory of a new school of psychologists to a large part of the ritual and cult-ideas of Greek religion'.³⁵⁵ *Themis* predictably provoked negative reactions both in Europe and in America.³⁵⁶ However, for all the

³⁵² Harrison (1924), p. 63.

³⁵³ Harrison (1927b), p. 68.

³⁵⁴ Harrison (1912), p. 497. Cf. 'The Roman Church with her wider humanity includes the figure of the Mother, who is both Mother and Maid. *In this she follows the teaching of the Minoans* [my emphasis].' Harrison (1924), p. 62.

³⁵⁵ Farnell (1913b), p. 61.

³⁵⁶ Farnell called it 'propagandist rather than scientific'. Farnell (1913b), p. 61. Deubner was only one among many in stating 'Über J.E. Harrison's "Themis" muß ich ein im wesentlichen negatives Urteil abgeben' Deubner (1920–1921), p. 429. In the

criticism levelled against it, for all of Harrison's bias against the Olympian gods and the tenuousness of her sweeping claims, in recognizing that anthropology and, especially, sociology offered new insights and opened up new possibilities, Harrison's work heralded a new era for the understanding of Greek religion the impact of which is still felt in the discipline today, and also pointed to the potential of vase-painting as source for the study of ritual.³⁵⁷ Dodds would famously share Harrison's (and Lang's) interest in the investigation of 'irrational' aspects of Greek religion.³⁵⁸ Moreover, the emphasis which Harrison placed on ritual and social aspects, and especially initiation, would be a prominent feature in the study of Greek religion throughout the twentieth century and to the present day. The work of Gernet and Jeanmaire may be placed in this tradition,³⁵⁹ and later of Vernant and Burkert.³⁶⁰

United States, Shorey grudgingly acknowledged that 'A few of our students of religion, I regret to say, pursue the *ignis fatuus* of pseudo-science on the trail of Miss Harrison and Mr. Cornford into the swamp of "after-philologie"'. Shorey (1919), p. 56. For further critical reactions see Robinson (2002), pp. 230–2, Wheeler-Barclay (2010), pp. 235–239, S. Fiske, *Heretical Hellenism* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008), p. 187.

³⁵⁷ Schlesier (1990), p. 139.

³⁵⁸ Cf. Dodds (1977), p. 181, Schlesier (1990), p. 139, Beard (2000), p. 7.

³⁵⁹ Burkert (1980), pp. 178–9.

³⁶⁰ Henrichs (1987), pp. 14–15, 30–1, Schlesier (1990), p. 139, Lloyd-Jones (1996), p. 61, Beard (2000), p. 7, Versnel (1994), pp. 51–60. A further similarity between Harrison and Burkert concerns the interest in vase-paintings as sources of evidence for ritual: W. Burkert, 'Ein Schlußwort als Dank', in Graf (1998), pp. 441–4 at p. 442.

Conclusion

As we have seen, far from being ‘a subject of curious but almost disinterested inquiry’, the interpretation of Greek religion and its gods during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was intertwined with major contemporary religious and cultural questions. Interpreted as gods of specific natural elements or as universal gods, as descendants of *Sondergötter* or of Totems, as ideal ethical personalities or as projections of collective emotion, the Greek gods attest to different modern beliefs, concerns and agendas. The competing theories that appeared in the scholarship of the period allow us to discern how the study of Greek religion was invested with significance for the present and provides emphatic examples of the intersection of the history of classical scholarship with modern cultural, theological and intellectual history. Looking back at the various theories that had appeared and disappeared in the history of the study of religion M.P. Nilsson stated: ‘if one is not the prisoner of preconceived opinions, one must acknowledge, justly, that none of these idols of a day has been vain. All of them have taught us to understand better the problem of religion and its origin, after criticism has reduced them to their true importance.’¹ One may take issue with Nilsson on the question of ‘true importance’, yet the theories we have examined have contributed in varying degrees to shedding light on different aspects of the Greek gods and may still serve to stimulate interest in issues that are under-discussed in current scholarship.

As we mentioned, the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries comprise a crucial period in the history of the interpretation of the Greek gods in the course of which themes and theories that had

¹ Nilsson (1949), p. 106.

long been influential retreated or were transformed and new ones emerged that have affected the study of Greek religion to the present day.

The debate over Greek *Urmonotheismus* which, as we saw, continued to dominate the study of Greek religion in the nineteenth century started to recede from the foreground from the last years of the nineteenth century onwards. One consequence was the comparative decline of the primary focus on Zeus as a Supreme God in subsequent studies of Greek religion. This development was closely linked to the increasing secularization of scholarship on Greek religion. Although, as we saw, *Altertumswissenschaft* was distinct as a discipline from theology, in practise the study of Greek religion in nineteenth-century Germany was largely at the hands of classical scholars who were also trained (Christian Protestant) theologians. This unofficial bond between the study of Greek religion and theology started to loosen from the end of the nineteenth century onwards (though, as shall will see, it has not been entirely dissolved to the present day). According to the new majority view that would establish itself in classical scholarship, if the question were approached from a historical rather than a theological viewpoint, Greek religion appeared to be polytheistic as far back as the historian's gaze could reach.

Theories of Greek *Urmonotheismus* continued to find some support in the first decades of the twentieth century primarily in two contexts: a) theories of universal 'primitive' monotheism. One of the most influential figures in this respect was the, significantly, ordained theologian and anthropologist Wilhelm Schmidt (1868–1954), founder of the Revue *Anthropos* (1906).² Launching an attack on evolutionist accounts of the history of religion Schmidt argued that High Gods came before other forms of religion such as animism or totemism.³ In advancing the theory of High Gods Schmidt drew on Lang's theory of Supreme Beings. Indeed, he explicitly portrayed himself as a continuator of Lang: 'I cannot forget that my labours in the field of Comparative Religion are nothing but a continuation of certain parts of the work of a great Scottish scholar, Andrew Lang. In 1910 I had the great pleasure of meeting him in London. In 1912 he died. It was in that year that the first volume of my *Ursprung der Gottesidee* appeared, carrying forward what he had so strenuously

² Waardenburg (1999), p. 264.

³ Waardenburg (1999), pp. 271, 275.

begun.⁴ Under the influence of Schmidt's theories, certain theological writers, but also classical scholars argued that the notion of a High God went back to the origins of Greek religion as of all religions.⁵ b) The discovery of the Minoan civilization gave rise to the theory of Minoan 'Dual Monotheism' consisting in the worship of a great goddess and her male consort.⁶

Both arguments from universal *Urmonotheismus* and from Minoan religion were met with scepticism by major scholars of Greek religion. Farnell reiterated his opposition to theories of 'primitive' monotheism in *The Attributes of God* in 1925.⁷ One year later Kern stated in the first volume of his *Die Religion der Griechen* that the notion of a Hellenic *Urmonotheismus* embodied in Zeus had long been recognized as illusory.⁸ Nilsson as well rejected both the theory of universal High Gods and of Minoan Dual Monotheism in his writings in the 1920s while in a 1933 article he argued against the theory of solar primitive monotheism that Sarasin had reiterated.⁹ Scholars such as Picard continued to advance theories of Minoan monotheism in the early 1930s.¹⁰ Yet already from the beginning of the twentieth century, the interest in the study of Greek religion had increasingly started to shift from the question of *Urmonotheismus* into the question of how far 'monotheistic' tendencies or elements of unity of the divine could be discerned in Greek religion of historical times. This question continues to intrigue students of Greek polytheism to

⁴ Quoted in Waardenburg (1999), p. 274.

⁵ On Schmidt and his followers see F. Pfister, *Die Religion der Griechen und Römer. Darstellung und Literaturbericht (1918–1929/30), Jahresbericht über die Fortschritte der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft. Supplementband 229*, 1930, pp. 45–9.

⁶ 'They [the Aegean Peoples] personified the Supreme Principle as a woman, to whom was subordinated a young male, less in honour and probably later in time. There is no evidence for more deities than these. The religion was what may be called a Dual Monotheism.' D.G. Hogarth, 'Aegean Religion', in J. Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. I (Edinburgh: Clark, 1908), pp. 141–8 at p. 143.

⁷ Farnell (1925), p. 65.

⁸ 'Das Traumgebilde von dem uranfänglichen Monotheismus der Hellenen, der in Zeus verkörpert sei, ist längst als trügerisch erkannt.' Kern (1926), p. 74.

⁹ Nilsson (1927), pp. 338–9, 344ff., M.P. Nilsson, 'Sonnenkalender und Sonnenreligion', *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 30, 1933, pp. 141–73. As we saw, Sarasin argued that 'Am Anfang war die Sonne einziger Gott': Sarasin (1924), p. 3. Nilsson reiterated his rejection of theories of *Urmonotheismus* in his first letter to Nock: Nilsson (1949), pp. 102–6.

¹⁰ Picard (1930), pp. 41–2.

the present day,¹¹ the majority of whom, it may be observed, tend to come, like their predecessors, from monotheistic religious or cultural backgrounds. In recent years, particular emphasis has been placed on the Hellenistic period and on late antiquity. Thus, as we saw, Versnel argued in his studies of Hellenistic religion for henotheistic aspects in the worship of deities such as Isis.¹² With respect to late antiquity, the question has received attention especially since the appearance in 1999 of *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, edited by P. Athanassiadi and M. Frede.¹³ In that volume it was argued that 'monotheism, for the most part quite independently of Judaism and Christianity, was increasingly widespread by the time of late antiquity, certainly among the educated and in particular in the Greek East'.¹⁴ We note that the question emphatically debated in nineteenth-century scholarship as to how far the Greeks had been capable of (in the context of that period *Ur-*) monotheism without foreign influence still preoccupies scholars. The appearance of *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* has contributed to a renewed debate about how far the term 'monotheism' can be meaningfully ascribed to 'pagans' of the first centuries AD and how 'pagan monotheism' of that period may compare to Jewish and Christian monotheism.¹⁵

As far as Greek religion of the archaic and classical period is concerned, the tendency in recent scholarship is to regard the use of the term 'monotheistic' as anachronistic.¹⁶ The question is rather phrased as how far there was unity in the Greek conception of the divine and in what ways was this unity articulated. It has long been suggested that in Homer expressions like 'the will of Zeus' reflected a sense of 'unified divine purpose'.¹⁷ The tendency of Greek writers of the classical period to refer to the gods by using singular forms like 'ὁ θεός' or 'τὸ θεῖον'

¹¹ For recent treatments see ch. III on 'One God: Three Greek Experiments in Oneness', Versnel (2011), pp. 239–307 and West (1999), who also examine monotheistic elements in Greek philosophy, and Parker (2011), pp. 66–7.

¹² Versnel (1990b), Versnel (2011), pp. 280–301.

¹³ Mitchell/van Nuffelen (2010), p. 3.

¹⁴ Athanassiadi/Frede (1999), p. 1.

¹⁵ Athanassiadi/Frede (1999), p. 2, Mitchell/van Nuffelen (2010), pp. 2, 6.

¹⁶ Parker (2011), p. 66. See further the discussion of the terms 'monotheism' and 'polytheism' in J. North, 'Pagan Ritual and Monotheism', in Mitchell/van Nuffelen (2010), pp. 34–52. Cf. S.R.F. Price, *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999b), p. 11.

¹⁷ E.g. West (1999), pp. 23–4. Cf. Otto (1956), p. 79.

has further attracted attention in this context,¹⁸ although, as Parker observes, 'the reverse also applies'.¹⁹ However, as Parker further notes, expressions such as the 'gods', 'god', 'Zeus' or 'fate' could all stand for 'the uncontrollable and inevitable element shaping and constraining human life',²⁰ implying an underlying unity. In considering this question, engaging with some points raised in the context of nineteenth-century debates can still be fruitful. The family ties among the Greek gods and the various forms of divine groupings, for example, which, as we saw, scholars like Welker, Nägelsbach or Preller emphasized, arguably do suggest a degree of unity in the Greek conception of the divine world. So does the Greek tendency to equate foreign gods with their own, despite possible exceptions like Bendis. The significance of these aspects becomes clearer if Greek polytheism is compared to other polytheistic religions, whose gods are not related in such a manner to one another.

In addition, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed the fading of one of the most influential methods of interpretation of the Greek gods since antiquity—physical interpretation. As we saw, as physical interpretations owed part of their prominence in the nineteenth century to their resonance with contemporary romantic attitudes to nature, so was their decline precipitated by the fact that they fell short of their critics' conception of religion. In contemporary scholarship, the association of the major Greek gods with parts of the natural world, to the extent that it is demonstrable, has come to be viewed as only one of their aspects, rather as the original, or as a privileged one, holding the key to their interpretation.²¹ Indeed, a case can be made that with the increasing shift of emphasis in the course of the twentieth century on the gods' social and civic functions—that replaced the earlier focus on Greek religion as *Naturreligion* in the writings both of scholars influenced by folklore studies and anthropology like Nilsson and, previously, of scholars in the physical tradition—the relation of the gods with the natural world is currently given less attention than it merits. Certainly the excesses of the advocates of physical interpretations and the

¹⁸ West (1999), p. 40, François (1957), Brulé (2005), p. 10, Versnel (2011), pp. 268ff.

¹⁹ Parker (2011), p. 67.

²⁰ Parker (2011), p. 67.

²¹ Parker (2011), pp. 73–4, 77, cf. J. Larson, 'A Land Full of Gods: Nature Deities in Greek Religion', in D. Ogden (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Religion* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 56–70 at p. 56.

hostility of earlier critics appear to have conduced to the relative neglect until recent times of the worship, alongside the major gods, of natural elements and forces like rivers and winds in Greece.²² As Parker points out, 'Their role in cult may be modest, but for analytical purposes what matters is that they can receive cult at all.'²³ Research themes that would be worth pursuing in this context are how did the worship of personifications of natural elements compare to the worship of non-elemental deities and whether the former displayed a tendency to expand their powers beyond their physical domains.

In addition, as we saw, the search for the origins of Greek religion and, specifically, for the origins of the Greek gods continued to be a primary concern in nineteenth-century scholarship. From K.O. Müller's *Die Dorier* in 1824 to Preller's *Griechische Mythologie* in 1854 to Usener's *Götternamen* in 1896 the discovery of the origins of the gods was considered to be of paramount importance. Despite Farnell's criticism at the turn of the century, questions of origins did not cease to concern scholars in the twentieth century²⁴ and indeed to the present. The discoveries of Schliemann and Evans raised the question of how far the origins of the Greek gods were Minoan or Mycenaean which would be a major theme in the work of Nilsson.²⁵ The appearance of the names of several Greek gods in Linear B tablets²⁶ gave new interest to this question. However, the origins of the Greek gods are no longer seen as revealing their essence or defining their development as they largely had been for previous generations of scholars.²⁷ Moreover, if the quest for origins continues, it is being recognized that 'there is not one origin, there is no *the* "origin of Greek religion"'.²⁸

²² For recent treatments see Larson (2007), Burkert (2011), pp. 269–71, Parker (2011), pp. 73–7.

²³ Parker (2011), p. 79.

²⁴ In 1969 Herington would still cast doubt on the relevance of origins for the understanding of later Greek religion: Herington (1969), p. 170.

²⁵ 'What is the Minoan and what is the Greek contribution to that product of fusion which is the historical Greek religion? This is for the present the crucial problem of Greek religion.' Nilsson (1927), p. 4. Cf. Despland (1974), pp. 128–9.

²⁶ Bremmer (2010), p. 3.

²⁷ Cf. Graf (2009), p. 130. Indicative of the change in the view of the interpretive value of origins is Pirenne-Delforge's point that 'la quête des origines de la divinité ne nous semble pas constituer un présupposé indispensable à l'étude de ses cultes aux époques archaïque et classique, mais constitue un problème en soi'. Pirenne-Delforge (1994), p. 9.

²⁸ Burkert (2011), p. 39. For a recent assessment of the state of scholarship on the origins of Greek religion including Indo-European, Minoan and Mycenaean and Near Eastern influences see Burkert (2011), pp. 25–39, Bremmer (2010), pp. 1–6.

For all their differences, from K.O. Müller and Forchhammer to Usener and Farnell, nineteenth-century scholars were on common ground in regarding the interpretation of the Greek gods as an essential part of the study of Greek religion. By contrast, in the work of Robertson Smith or Harrison, amid the emphasis on ritual practices and social aspects, the gods at times seemed to withdraw into the background. This change of focus would massively influence the subsequent study of Greek religion. Although, as we shall see, the gods retained a prominent position in the writings of scholars like Wilamowitz or Otto, in the course of the twentieth century they largely ceded the foreground to the study of rituals.²⁹ One of the chief ways in which engaging with the writings of nineteenth-century scholars can contribute to the current study of Greek religion is by providing a stimulus for considering the gods again as one of its essential aspects.

The turn of scholarly attention away from the gods and especially from the Olympians in the early decades of the twentieth century provoked the reaction of Wilamowitz.³⁰ In a letter of 1913 he praised G. Murray for not neglecting the Olympian gods in *Four Stages of Greek Religion* (1912) unlike other contemporary scholars who focused their attention on the Olympians' distant predecessors or on their successors-turned-abstractions. In Wilamowitz's view, just like fifth-century poetry or Attic philosophy and language were and would remain classic, so would the Olympian gods.³¹ In the introduction to the first volume of *Der Glaube der Hellenen* (1931) Wilamowitz reiterated his dismay at the contemporary lack of

²⁹ Henrichs (1987), p. 4, Henrichs (2001), p. 8 who places the work of Burkert as well in the tradition of the prioritization of ritual over the gods, cf. Bremmer (2010), p. 15. On approaches to the Greek gods in twentieth-century scholarship from Wilamowitz to Burkert see Bremmer (2010), pp. 7–18.

³⁰ On Wilamowitz's view of the Greek gods see Henrichs (1985), Bremmer (2010), pp. 7–10.

³¹ 'Gott sei Dank, Ihnen sind die Olympier nicht verloren, die gegenwärtig zerrieben oder verflüchtigt werden zwischen den Fratzen aus denen sie sich herausgehoben haben, und den Schemen, zu denen die späte Zeit sie wieder macht. Grade so wie die grosse Poesie des fünften Jahrhunderts und die Philosophie der attischen Periode und die attische Sprache classisch sind und bleiben, wie sie sich erhalten werden bis an der Tage letzten, werden es auch diese Götter tun.' U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff to G. Murray, 2 January 1913, n. 56, in A.H. Bierl, W.M. Calder III, R.L. Fowler (eds.), *The Prussian and the Poet. The Letters of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff to Gilbert Murray (1894–1930)* (Hildesheim: Weidmann, 1991), p. 114. Cf. W.M. Calder III, 'Introduction', Bierl/Calder/Fowler (1991), pp. 1–7 at p. 5.

interest in the Olympians and in Greek religion of the historical period and conversely at the tendency to prioritize earlier periods or the time of the 'decline' of traditional religion.³² Already in 1895 Wilamowitz had emphasized that 'Unperturbed by the anthropologists and theologians of today' he would stay focused on 'what the Hellenes, with whom and for whom I live, thought and felt about their gods, who to them were as much of a given as the nature that surrounded them and the language they spoke'.³³ In the most famous plea in the history of the discipline for the recognition of the significance of the gods Wilamowitz pronounced: 'The gods exist. Taking and acknowledging that as a given fact, as the Greeks did, is the first condition for understanding their faith and cult.'³⁴ Wilamowitz further underscored that 'One cannot be a historian of religion without recreating in his heart the faith in the ancient gods'.³⁵ We may compare his exhortation at the conclusion of his lecture on Apollo: 'That emotion which inspired the hearts of men long dead must live again in our hearts. We must feel with them that awe and that rapture whose source they worshipped in their gods. We must learn to believe as they believed. Be it in the quiet of our chamber, when we read the verses of some religious poet, be it on the floor of some ancient temple which to the historical sense still preserves its sanctity, we must feel in our own lives the epiphany of the god.'³⁶ As we have seen, Wilamowitz shared the focus on faith with earlier nineteenth-century scholars, and most

³² 'Es ist auffallend, daß die modernen Religionshistoriker für die Olympier wenig übrig haben; sie scheinen wirklich den Verfall der Religion da anzusetzen, wo die historische Zeit anfängt, und ihr Interesse beginnt erst wieder, wenn die alte Religion in Verwesung ist und der wüste Aberglaube der Zauberpapyri sich an ihre Stelle drängt.' Wilamowitz (1931), p. 10. Cf. Henrichs (1985), pp. 279–80, Bremmer (2010), p. 9. On Wilamowitz's long-lasting interest in the Olympians see Henrichs (1985), pp. 274ff. One may compare Nilsson's observation a few years earlier: 'The study of religion has either preferred to concern itself with the downfall of the religion of antiquity at the great crisis which ended the classical period, or has endeavoured to lay bare the primitive foundation upon which the Greek religion, like others, was built up. There is undeniably some justice in the complaint that the Greek religion of the period when the prosperity and culture of Greece were at their height has been neglected.' Nilsson (1925), p. 9.

³³ Wilamowitz (1895a), pp. xv, xiv.

³⁴ 'Die Götter sind da. Daß wir dies als gegebene Tatsache mit den Griechen erkennen und anerkennen, ist die erste Bedingung für das Verständnis ihres Glaubens und ihres Kultus'. Wilamowitz (1931), p. 17.

³⁵ Wilamowitz (1931), p. 9. In expressing this view, he cited A. Frickenhaus (1882–1925). Cf. Henrichs (1985), p. 273.

³⁶ Wilamowitz (1908), p. 45. Cf. Henrichs (1985), p. 295.

notably, Welcker.³⁷ The emphasis which Wilamowitz laid on the faith of the Greeks went hand in hand with his faith *in* the Greeks. Especially after the shattering effects that the First World War had on him, both at the national level with the defeat of Germany and the overthrow of the Prussian monarchy to which he owed his allegiance, and personally with the loss of his son, the latter provided a major support in his old age.³⁸

The gods and especially the Homeric gods and Dionysos also occupied a central position in the writings of W.F. Otto (1874–1958). This is reflected in the titles of his two major works, *Die Götter Griechenlands. Das Bild des Göttlichen im Spiegel des griechischen Geistes* (1929) and *Dionysos. Mythos und Kultus* (1933).³⁹ Otto rejected both anthropological approaches and the historical-philological approach of Wilamowitz.⁴⁰ He took issue with them for being evolutionist and failing to shed light on what was distinctively Greek about Greek religion.⁴¹ Emphatically dissociating himself from efforts to trace the historical development of Greek religion, Otto focused on the religion of Homer in a manner that would appear ‘ahistorical’. Otto’s approach to Greek religion is at once heavily rooted in earlier scholarship and one of the most subversive in the history of the discipline. The plurality of the Greek gods, which, as we saw, was a source of discomfort to many earlier devout scholars, for Otto did not stand ‘in contrast to monotheism, but is perhaps its most ingenious form’.⁴² The divine world of the Greeks, according to Otto, displayed unity amid plurality. In this context, he laid stress on how the Olympian gods formed a single family and how they were, in different ways, all related to Zeus.⁴³ Recalling the points made by Welcker or Nägelsbach Otto asserted: ‘This divine family is to be recognized and venerated as the grandest expression of the unity of the divine in its infinite diversity.’⁴⁴

³⁷ Henrichs (1987), p. 14. On Wilamowitz’s views on faith: Henrichs (1985), pp. 274, 291–3, Fowler (2009), p. 192, Bremmer (2010), p. 9.

³⁸ Henrichs (1985), pp. 264–5.

³⁹ On Otto’s view of the gods see Donnenberg (1961), Henrichs (1987), pp. 26–7, Cancik (1998), pp. 139–86, Leege (2011).

⁴⁰ Otto (1933), pp. 11–12, Schlesier (1994), p. 216, J.N. Bremmer, ‘Walter F. Otto’s *Dionysos* (1933)’, in A. Bernabé, M.H. de Jàuregui, A.I. Jiménez San Cristóbal, and R.M. Hernández (eds.), *Redefining Dionysos* (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2013), pp. 4–22 at pp. 4–5.

⁴¹ Otto (1933), pp. 1–16. On Otto’s rejection of evolutionist approaches to Greek religion see Donnenberg (1961), pp. 28ff.

⁴² Otto (1956), p. 79. Cf. Donnenberg (1961), p. 76.

⁴³ Otto (1956), p. 79.

⁴⁴ Otto (1956), p. 80.

Furthermore, Otto vindicated in the most emphatic terms Homeric religion and its anthropomorphism which had been an object of criticism since the time of Xenophanes and which, as we saw, had been in the most recent past ferociously attacked by Harrison: 'Whoever calls the choice of the pure human form a profanation of the divine has no prospect of understanding Greek religion's great idea.'⁴⁵ In a further example of modern poetry being invoked as a guide to the understanding of Greek religion, Otto drew on Goethe and Hölderlin as well as on contemporary *Lebensphilosophie* to argue that in the Olympian gods of Homer the world had revealed itself in *Seinsgestalten*.⁴⁶ Otto agreed with Wilamowitz's call to recognize that 'the gods exist'.⁴⁷ However, going beyond Wilamowitz, he maintained: 'Whether we believe in them as gods or not, the extent of their significance and their material presence is still evident even to us.'⁴⁸ Recalling the distinction between the Greek and the 'Oriental' religions in nineteenth-century scholarship Otto further drew a sharp contrast between the Greek and the Eastern conception of the divine: whereas in 'Oriental' religions divinity was conceived as «das ganz andere», associated with enormity and boundlessness, in Greek religion divinity was conceived as «eben dies».⁴⁹ In his writings as well this contrast was significantly placed in the context of a diachronic opposition between Greece/Europe and the 'Orient': 'Wherever the Greek spirit and its ideas are venerated, there let us remember that the Greek gods were its greatest, indeed to a certain extent the very embodiment of its ideas, and that they will endure as long as the European spirit, which has found its most important incarnation in them, is not utterly subservient to the spirit of the Orient or utilitarian reason.'⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Otto (1955), p. 130. 'Die Götter Griechenlands (1929) stellen einen mitreißenden Versuch dar, die Götter Homers endlich als Götter ernst zu nehmen, entgegen einer 2500-jährigen Kritik' Burkert (2011), p. 15.

⁴⁶ Otto (1955), p. 107. Burkert (1980), p. 188. U. Hölscher, 'Strömungen der deutschen Gräzistik in den zwanziger Jahren', in Flashar (1995), pp. 65–85 at p. 84. Cf. Cancik (1998), pp. 144, 150, 154.

⁴⁷ Otto (1933), p. 19. On the similarities and contrasts between Wilamowitz and Otto in this respect see Henrichs (1985), pp. 293–4.

⁴⁸ 'Ob wir an sie, als Götter, glauben oder nicht, ihre Bedeutungsfülle und Konkretheit bestätigt sich auch noch für uns': Otto (1955), p. 107.

⁴⁹ Otto (1955), p. 121.

⁵⁰ W.F. Otto, *Die Götter Griechenlands. Das Bild des Göttlichen im Spiegel des griechischen Geistes* (Bonn: Cohen, 1929), pp. 13–14. Cf. 'In der altgriechischen Gottesverehrung offenbart sich uns eine der größten religiösen Ideen der Menschheit—wir dürfen sagen: *Die religiöse Idee des europäischen Geistes*' Otto (1929), p. 13. Cf.

It is notable that Otto dismissed the older physical interpretations of the Greek gods on grounds which in part recall those of their nineteenth-century critics: 'The Olympian deity is so far from being the soul of an elemental primeval force. It is higher reality, spiritual nature.'⁵¹ In addition, Otto argued against the view of the Greek gods as vegetation gods, as, for example, it appeared in the work of Nilsson, on grounds which again are reminiscent of those advanced by Curtius against physical interpretations: 'It is believed nowadays that the myth of gods who are born and die must necessarily be related to the change of seasons and the fate of vegetation which is associated with it (cf. Nilsson, *Minoan-Mycenaean Religion* 461ff.). But the meaning of a true god is never so restricted that the idea of plant growth could exhaust it.'⁵² In a further parallel to the views of scholars in the historical-critical tradition, though without (to my knowledge) referring to them, Otto argued instead that the Olympian gods were universal gods: 'The deity is always a *totality*, an entire world in its perfection. That applies also to the highest gods, Zeus, Athene and Apollo, the bearers of the highest ideals. Not one of them represents a single virtue in isolation, not one of them is to be encountered only in *one* quarter of life's varied whole, and every one strives to shape, fill, and illuminate the entire span of human existence with their own peculiar spirit.'⁵³ However, unlike scholars

Donnenberg (1961), p. 42. As Bremmer observes with respect to Otto's references to *Offenbarung*, 'it is one of the paradoxes of Otto's religious development that he could not give up Christian terminology, even though he had renounced the Christian faith.' Bremmer (2013), p. 5. Otto developed his views on the contrast between Europe and the 'Orient' in 'Der Europäische Geist und die Weisheit des Ostens', in Otto (1955), pp. 91–113. He characteristically argued that 'Wie vieles sich auch inzwischen in Europa gewandelt haben mag, der Blick in die asiatische Welt belehrt uns, daß der griechische Weg der unsere ist'. Otto (1955), p. 94.

⁵¹ Otto (1955), p. 132.

⁵² Otto (1933), p. 175. Cf. Otto (1956), p. 19.

⁵³ 'Immer ist die Gottheit eine *Totalität*, eine ganze Welt in ihrer Vollendung. Das trifft auch auf die obersten Götter, Zeus, Athene und Apollon, die Träger der höchsten Ideale, zu. Keiner von ihnen stellt eine einzelne Tugend vor Augen, keiner von ihnen ist nur in *einer* Richtung des vielbewegten Lebens anzutreffen, ein jeder will den ganzen Umkreis des menschlichen Daseins mit seinem eigentümlichen Geist erfüllen, gestalten und erleuchten': Otto (1929), p. 207. Cf. 'Kein vollbürtiger Olympier vertritt ein einziges Element oder ein einzelnes Geschehen.' Otto (1955), p. 128. This made Otto argue that Hephaistos, as god of fire, 'hat eigentlich mit dem Olymp nichts zu tun'. Otto (1955), p. 128. We recall that Hephaistos had also caused problems to H.D. Müller.

in the historical-critical tradition, Otto, as the passage suggests, held that each universal god possessed a 'peculiar spirit' that differentiated him/her from the other universal gods. Each encompassed 'a world for itself, or rather it is the entire world, in a special sense, filled and shaped by a special spirit'. In the case of Hermes, for example, Otto argued that his world 'possesses all things and processes which recur in other worlds, but in that world they have the peculiar character which Hermes bestows upon them. So we can understand that love, for example, is as much at home in the realm of Hermes as of Aphrodite, Hera and the other deities, but that it has an entirely new significance each time. In the realm of Hermes it manifests itself in its serendipitous aspect, as the opportune moment.'⁵⁴ This view brings to mind the structuralist position in contemporary scholarship that the Greek gods share common domains, but each approaches them in a distinctive manner.

The question of the universality of power of the Greek gods is currently receiving renewed attention. Versnel emphasizes how structuralist interpretations of Greek polytheism postulating a sharp delimitation of the functions of different gods tend to preclude the notion of divine omnipotence.⁵⁵ According to Vernant, for example, 'the law of this society of the beyond is the strict definition of the forces and their hierarchical counterbalancing. This excludes the categories of the all-powerful, the omniscient, the infinite.'⁵⁶ As Parker observes, however, patron gods like Athena at Athens or Hera at Argos display a tendency to expand their powers beyond a sharply delimited core 'mode of action', approaching omnipotence though without supplanting other deities.⁵⁷ In his recent study of divine omnipotence Versnel suggests that, in fact, many Greek gods, from Zeus to seemingly less likely candidates like Asklepios, could be invested with omnipotence depending on the context.⁵⁸ According to Versnel, 'a Greek god may alternatively be conceived of as being restricted in his potential, for instance by the limitations of his own specialization, or be acclaimed as being able to do anything he wishes.'⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Otto (1955), p. 129.

⁵⁵ Versnel (2011), pp. 392–3.

⁵⁶ F.I. Zeitlin (ed.), *Jean-Pierre Vernant. Mortals and Immortals. Collected Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 273. Cf. Versnel (2011), pp. 28, 392–3.

⁵⁷ Parker (2011), pp. 86–7, Parker (2005), pp. 396–7.

⁵⁸ Ch. V 'God. The question of divine omnipotence', Versnel (2011), pp. 379–438.

⁵⁹ Versnel (2011), p. 9.

Karl Kerényi (1897–1973) shared Otto's emphasis on the Greek gods. Throughout his long career, Kerényi devoted several studies to individual gods and pairs of gods. His approach displays the influence, on the one hand, of Otto, and, on the other hand, of Jungian psychoanalysis.⁶⁰ In particular, Kerényi made use of Jung's concept of 'archetypes'. In his eyes, the 'archetypical' constituted 'the permanent in history'.⁶¹ According to Kerényi, the Greek gods represented archetypes or *Urbilder*. Thus Zeus and Hera were 'the archetypical couple, Zeus the man and husband—even the brother and husband—, Hera the woman and wife', Dionysos an *Urbild* of indestructible life and so forth.⁶² As we saw, Kerényi further laid particular stress on Zeus recalling Welcker: 'it is not in question that Greek religion was chiefly the religion of Zeus and not in question that the religion of Zeus is the religion which is characteristic for the Greeks.'⁶³

To return to the 1930s, in contrast to the writings of Wilamowitz or Otto, the retreat of the gods from the foreground is visible in L. Gernet and A. Boulanger's *Le Génie Grec Dans la Religion* (1932). The emphasis was there placed on such aspects as festivals and cult and the various contexts of religious life in Greek antiquity.⁶⁴ The gods, with the significant exception of Dionysos, appear rather late in the book and are but briefly treated.⁶⁵ It is notable that although Gernet is regarded as a precursor of structuralist scholars in terms of the interest in the social dimension of Greek religion, some of his views on the gods and on Greek polytheism in *Le Génie Grec* run against fundamental tenets of structuralism. Thus Gernet cast doubt on the notion that the gods' diverse roles and functions were logically connected, and pointed to contingent factors.⁶⁶ Furthermore, he

⁶⁰ F. Graf, 'Griechische und römische Mythologie bei Karl Kerényi', in Schlesier/Sanchiño Martínez (2006), pp. 71–82 at pp. 71–2, Despland (1974), p. 137.

⁶¹ Kerényi (1972), p. 5.

⁶² Kerényi (1972), p. 45. K. Kerényi, *Dionysos. Urbild des unzerstörbaren Lebens* (Munich: L. Müller, 1976), Henrichs (1987), p. 29.

⁶³ Kerényi (1972), p. 21.

⁶⁴ Gernet/Boulanger (1932), pp. 31ff., 191ff., 289ff.

⁶⁵ Gernet/Boulanger (1932), pp. 265–76, Bremmer (2010), p. 10.

⁶⁶ Gernet/Boulanger (1932), p. 265. In a characteristic contrast to Otto's account of Hermes, Gernet maintained: 'Entre la divinité pastorale qu'est Hermès, le dieu des routes qu'il est également, l'Hermès chthonien et conducteur des morts, la bonne volonté des modernes peut découvrir des connexions logiques: il est tout à fait gratuit de les supposer dans l'esprit des intéressés.' Gernet/Boulanger (1932), p. 268. As we shall see, Versnel revisits the question of unity in the case of Hermes: Versnel (2011), pp. 309–77.

argued against the conception of Greek polytheism as tightly organized.⁶⁷

Despite the prominence of the gods in the work of scholars like Wilamowitz or Otto, M.P. Nilsson (1874–1967), the towering figure in the study of Greek religion in the middle of the twentieth century,⁶⁸ noted in his *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion* (1941) the relative decline of interest in them and underlined the need of redressing it: ‘the question of the origin and significance of the individual gods fell out of favour. Many may have believed this to be one of those questions to which there could never be a well-founded answer. In reality, it is unavoidable. As long as the Greeks believed in their gods, the development of their faith and religious practice is bound up with this question. For the more ancient times . . . there is no other way of gaining a picture of that religion in its entirety than to investigate belief in the individual gods.’⁶⁹ As this makes clear, for Nilsson too the question of belief remained of importance. In the beginning of the *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion*, he asserted that, as was the case in all religions, there was a faith in the religion of the ancient Greeks. However, as the articles of faith which Greek religion and its rituals were based on tended not to be explicitly articulated and were never encapsulated in an authoritative formulation, one could often gather them only from the examination of religious practice.⁷⁰ The emphasis on belief appeared anachronistic as modern scholarship increasingly embraced the view that Greek religion primarily involved the performance of rituals: from that stand-point ‘to start from questions about faith or personal piety is to impose alien values on ancient Greece’.⁷¹ This view has recently been challenged by scholars such as Bremmer, Parker, or Versnel who argue that the performance of rituals does not necessarily exclude and, in fact, presupposes a form of belief.⁷² In this context, it is notable that Chaniotis re-integrates

⁶⁷ ‘Au vrai, le polythéisme répugne à l’organisation’ Gernet/Boulanger (1932), p. 279. Cf. Gernet/Boulanger (1932), p. 278, Bremmer (2010), p. 11.

⁶⁸ Parker (2011), p. vii, Bremmer (2010), p. 11.

⁶⁹ Nilsson (1941), p. 360. On Nilsson’s account of the Greek gods see Bremmer (2010), pp. 11–14.

⁷⁰ Nilsson (1941), pp. 1–2.

⁷¹ As argued by Price (1999b), p. 3. Cf. Price (1999b), p. 126. On the history of the debate on the role of belief see Parker (2011), pp. 31–2.

⁷² Bremmer (1998), p. 24, Parker (2011), pp. 1–2, 31–4, H.S. Versnel, ‘Appendix Four: “Did the Greeks believe in their gods?”’, Versnel (2011), pp. 539–59. Versnel

belief in his definition of popular religion in antiquity which, he argues, was both expressed and enhanced through rituals: 'popular religion—that is, religion outside of the circles of the intellectual—is the belief in the presence and power of (a) god (*νομὴ ζεῖν θεόν*), a belief that is based on experience and is both expressed and enhanced through rituals.'⁷³

To go back to Nilsson, drawing on the work of Mannhardt and Frazer he laid stress on agrarian aspects and fertility.⁷⁴ In contrast to Otto Nilsson adopted an evolutionist approach to Greek religion.⁷⁵ Like his nineteenth-century predecessors, he sought to trace the development of the Greek gods from nature-daemons such as vegetation- and corn-spirits to the familiar gods of historical times.⁷⁶ It should be underscored, however, that although Nilsson placed emphasis on the association of the Greek gods with vegetation, he did not treat it as an all-explaining interpretive key. Rather he underlined that the conception and role of the gods developed in the course of time under the influence of external factors not necessarily related to their original function which could be pushed to the periphery.⁷⁷

concludes his discussion by answering the question emphatically in the affirmative: Versnel (2011), p. 559. We may recall in this context the view of the leading nineteenth-century German student of Greek ritual, P. Stengel: 'Gottesdienst und alle Formen und Arten seiner Bethätigung sind ohne Leben und ohne Seele, vergegenwärtigt man sich nicht jeden Augenblick auch den Glauben und das Empfinden des Volkes, das sie geschaffen und geübt hat.' Stengel (1890), p. 3.

⁷³ A. Chaniotis, 'Staging and Feeling the Presence of God: Emotion and Theatricality in Religious Celebrations in the Roman East', in L. Bricault and C. Bonnet (eds.), *Panthée: Religious Transformations in the Roman Empire*, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 169–89 at p. 188. Cf. A. Chaniotis, 'Emotional Community through Ritual. Initiates, Citizens, and Pilgrims as Emotional Communities in the Greek World', in A. Chaniotis (ed.), *Ritual Dynamics in the Ancient Mediterranean: Agency, Emotion, Gender, Representation*, (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2011), pp. 264–90.

⁷⁴ Bremmer (2010), p. 14, Parker (2011), pp. vii–viii. Frazer indeed wrote the preface to the 1925 English translation of Nilsson's *A History of Greek Religion*: J.G. Frazer, 'Preface', in Nilsson (1925), pp. 2–6.

⁷⁵ 'There is always a development, always an evolution', and (though opposing usual evolutionary series from preanimism all the way to monotheism), 'I think I should still be called an evolutionist.' Nilsson (1949), pp. 72, 73. For a comparison of Otto's and Nilsson's approach see Donnenberg (1961), pp. 47ff.

⁷⁶ E.g. Nilsson (1925), pp. 108–9, 118.

⁷⁷ 'Ein Gott ist gewachsen, nicht durch innere, von seiner ursprünglichen Funktion ausgehende Entwicklung, sondern auch durch das Hinzutreten von mehr äußerlich angeschlossenen Elementen, so daß der ursprüngliche Kristallisationspunkt sich schließlich an die Peripherie verschieben kann. Ein Gott ist den Bedürfnissen seiner

J.-P. Vernant (1919–2007) cited Nilsson's separate discussion of each god as an example of what he saw as a deeply flawed approach to Greek polytheism. He criticized Nilsson for failing to treat the Greek pantheon as an organized whole governed by internal logic. By his practice of discussing each god individually Nilsson provided, according to Vernant, but 'a gallery of disparate portraits' without addressing the key issue of how the gods were associated with or opposed to one another.⁷⁸ Valid as Vernant's criticism may be, it misses the historical significance of Nilsson's treatment of the gods: as we saw, Nilsson tried to vindicate the importance of the gods as objects of study in view of the tendency in scholarship to deprioritize them. French structuralism opened a new chapter in the history of the study of the Greek gods the influence of which reaches to the present day.⁷⁹ As Vernant's criticism of Nilsson suggests, the view of Greek polytheism as a logically organized system in which the gods are defined through the ways in which they relate to one another is fundamental to structuralist approaches. In his studies, Dumézil had approached Indo-European polytheisms as systems of classification of functions.⁸⁰ This approach and the implication that the gods are defined in relation to one another were applied to Greek religion by Vernant.⁸¹ According to the latter, 'A god is a power that represents a type of action, a kind of force. Within the framework of a pantheon, each of these powers becomes distinct not in itself as an isolated object but by virtue of its relative position in the aggregate of forces, by the structure of relations that oppose and unite it to the other powers that constitute the divine universe.'⁸² If the drawing of comparisons and contrasts among the Greek gods was in itself not novel, it was now theorized and pursued with a rigour that has largely transformed the study of the Greek gods. By investigating the various relations among the members of the Greek pantheon structuralist scholars have sought to shed light on the distinctive

Verehrer entsprungen, sowohl den materiellen wie sozialen und psychischen, und entwickelt sich mit diesen weiter.' Nilsson (1941), p. 361.

⁷⁸ Vernant (1980), pp. 212–13. Cf. Versnel (2011), p. 31, n. 25.

⁷⁹ Burkert (2011), p. 16, Burkert (1980), pp. 194–9.

⁸⁰ G. Dumézil, *Les Dieux des Indo-Européens* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1952), M. Detienne, 'Du Polythéisme en Général', *Classical Philology* 81(1), 1986, pp. 47–55 at p. 50.

⁸¹ Burkert (1977), p. 333, Detienne (1986), p. 50, n. 18.

⁸² Zeitlin (1991), p. 273. Cf. Versnel (2011), p. 27.

'essences' of the Greek gods which, they argue, were reflected in specific modes of action or intervention.⁸³ As Parker observes, 'this was, in a sense, a very conservative position, because it gave back to the gods an essence and an essential unity that had often been denied to them.'⁸⁴ One of the strongest critics of the notion of unity in twentieth-century scholarship was C.J. Herington, according to whom, 'the gods remain flickering reflections of the human mind, varying unpredictably according to time, locality, social class, and observer. The only possible justification for treating them as solid, unitary beings with defined origins and smoothly evolving careers is, therefore, mere convenience of exposition.'⁸⁵

W. Burkert (1931–2015) has contested the structuralist view of the Greek gods as powers. In his opinion, 'the Greek gods are persons, not abstractions, ideas, or concepts.'⁸⁶ Scholars such as Versnel and Bremmer have joined the debate. In Versnel's opinion, 'in everyday religious practice individual Greek gods were practically never conceived of as powers, let alone as cultural products, but were in the first place envisaged as *persons* with individual characters and personalities.'⁸⁷ Bremmer, on the other hand, suggests that "power" and "person" are two sides of the Greek divinities, which can come to the fore at different times and in different contexts'.⁸⁸ It may be noted with respect to this debate that to a scholar like Wilamowitz, for whom religion had fundamentally to do with emotion and belief, it was clear that the Greek gods were persons. As we shall see, in rejecting the interpretation of Apollo as a sun-god, he emphasized that the Greeks 'believed in Apollo not because he was a personification, but because he was a person and a God'.⁸⁹ To go back to Burkert,

⁸³ Parker (2005), p. 390.

⁸⁴ Parker (2005), p. 390. For an analysis of the contributions and limitations of structuralist interpretations of the Greek gods see Parker (2005), pp. 387–95, Parker (2011), pp. 88ff.

⁸⁵ Herington (1969), pp. 169–70 mentioned in Parker (2005), p. 390. Cf. Graf's view: 'The historian feels an intellectual pull to construct these fields into an underlying unity. Such a construction might satisfy a thinker's need of neatness; but it sacrifices so much historical diversity that it loses all value for the historian of religion.' Graf (2009), p. 180.

⁸⁶ Burkert (1985), p. 182, Burkert (2011), p. 281. On the broader debate between Vernant and Burkert see Bremmer (2010), pp. 15–17, Versnel (2011), pp. 26–36.

⁸⁷ Versnel (2011), p. 317.

⁸⁸ Bremmer (2010), pp. 16–17.

⁸⁹ Wilamowitz (1908), p. 28. Cf. Fowler (2009), p. 189. We are reminded of the grounds of Wilamowitz's opposition to Usener's approach: 'Is Faust wrong then when

he further criticized the structuralist conception of the Greek pantheon as a tightly organized system: 'Just as the Greek mind does not exist as a unified and definable structure, so the Greek pantheon cannot be regarded as a closed and harmonized system.'⁹⁰ He emphasized that 'a god cannot be constructed in order to fill a gap; one must come to know him, he must reveal himself, and so all kind of contingent factors come into play'.⁹¹

Reflecting at the end of his *Geschichte der klassischen Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte* almost a century ago on the plethora of the apparently frustrated efforts made by successive generations of scholars to discover the essence of the Greek gods, Gruppe suggested reconsidering the question itself and its priority.⁹² In his opinion, 'establishing the fundamental meaning of the individual deities really cannot, contrary to previous belief, be the highest task for the religious history of antiquity'.⁹³ Even as themes and questions shift in the history of the study of Greek religion and different opinions are expressed as to what the 'highest task' for scholars should be, the issue of whether the gods have a 'fundamental meaning' and the related issue of how to understand their various roles and functions tend to recur and remain controversial. As we have seen, three main tendencies may be observed under various forms in the history of the discipline concerning the question of how to account for the different functions of the Greek gods. One argues for strict unity or coherence among them deriving from an original *Grundbedeutung* or for distinctive modes of intervention reflecting a postulated essence (for example, physical interpretations, structuralist approaches); a second argues for the gradual narrowing of original omnipotence (historical-

he says "Feeling is everything"? No one prays to a concept.' Mette (1979–80), p. 80. We may compare also Wilamowitz's view: 'In jedem konkreten Falle, wo ein menschliches Individuum zu der Gottheit in ein persönliches Verhältnis treten will, muß es sie auch als Person fassen und wird sie individualisieren, so gut es kann.' For Wilamowitz, it was philosophical reflection that turned the personal gods into elemental or psychic powers and in so doing ruined traditional religion: Wilamowitz (1895b), p. 35. Citing Wilamowitz, Stengel also stated, 'Die Götter sind lebendige Personen. Wer das erkennt, erkennt das Wesen aller Religion.' Stengel (1890), p. 6. In one of the rare instances of agreement with Wilamowitz, Harrison as well asserted that 'the Greek, because dowered with imagination, *feels* his god as a *personality*'. Harrison (1924), p. 143.

⁹⁰ Burkert (1985), p. 218. Burkert (2011), p. 333, cf. Versnel (2011), pp. 31–2.

⁹¹ Burkert (1985), p. 218, Burkert (2011), p. 333.

⁹² Gruppe (1921), p. 234. ⁹³ Gruppe (1921), p. 234.

critical approach); while a third argues for an accretion of functions in response to historical developments and contingent factors (again some of the advocates of the historical-critical approach, scholars like Farnell, Gernet, Nilsson and to an extent Burkert).⁹⁴ As we saw, the most extreme versions of the latter view reject the notion of unity altogether. Even a cursory look at the history of the study of Greek religion suffices to show that theories postulating strict unity often overlook aspects that do not conform to them.⁹⁵ On the other hand, denying all the major gods (any) unity would appear to give away too much too quickly. Approaches that can accommodate random factors and context-specific differentiation⁹⁶ without necessarily ruling out some levels of unity or coherence and without generalizing from the case of one god to others may be more promising.

The ongoing debate between advocates and critics of structuralism has contributed to a renewed interest in the Greek gods. In recent years, with the appearance of the Routledge series on the 'Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World' and such works as N. Belayche and others (eds.), *Nommer les Dieux* (2005), J.N. Bremmer and A. Erskine (eds.), *The Gods of Ancient Greece* (2010), H.S. Versnel's *Coping with the Gods* (2011) or I. Polinskaya's *A Local History of Greek Polytheism* (2013) the gods are reclaiming their position at the centre of attention in the study of Greek religion. The changing emphases on different aspects of Greek religion in the history of the discipline have all too often resulted in the neglect of the issues that were previously on the foreground. The emergent revival of interest in the gods, to which this study is also intended to contribute, will be a dubious gain if it too conforms to this pattern instead of furthering a more balanced view of Greek religion.

If Zeus and Apollo have occupied a prominent place in this examination of the history of the field this was in part intended to convey the special attention that tended to be accorded to them in scholarship for a large part of the nineteenth century. From Zeus and Apollo to Dionysos, and from the Olympian to the Chthonian gods to the gods of the Orphics; or, from Zeus Kronion to Zeus the

⁹⁴ For versions of these approaches see Parker (2011), p. 86, Parker (2005), pp. 387–8, n. 4.

⁹⁵ Burkert (2011), p. 333, Versnel (2011), p. 10.

⁹⁶ For example, Parker (2011), p. 96 or Versnel's account of Hermes which argues for unity or a central function in certain contexts or levels without necessarily encompassing all the different personae of the god: Versnel (2011), pp. 309–77.

Indo-European Sky-god to Zeus Lykaios or Zeus Meilichios, and from Apollo the Sun-god to the Dorian Apollo to Apollo the arch-ephebe, we have seen the focus of scholarly attention shifting in the history of the discipline among the various figures of the Greek pantheon or among different facets of the same figure and alternative interpretations being proposed, depending on the interests and stand-points of modern interpreters. This constant process of re-interpretation continues, other divine figures or other aspects of the gods coming to the fore, and new theories being advanced, in large part under the influence of, or as a reaction to, the ones preceding them.⁹⁷ So long is the history of the interest in the Greek gods, such is the plethora of interpretations that have been put forward in the course of time that, as with other aspects of antiquity, the view one takes of the gods becomes also a way to articulate one's relation to one's predecessors: united by the shared interest in them, differentiating (or not) by what one makes of them. The Greek gods' resistance to being captured by a single theory, their openness to diverse interpretations that can and have infused them with contemporary meaning for the rationalist and the romantic, the devout and the atheist, or the chauvinist and the feminist alike, is essential to the continuation of the modern interest in them.⁹⁸

The nexus of interconnections between the current study of Greek religion and its historical context may be investigated by future scholars. Nevertheless, some tentative observations intended to contribute to a debate on contemporary interpretive tendencies and choices may not be out of order at the conclusion of this investigation of the history of the field.

The history of the discipline shows how crucially the interpretation of Greek religion has been affected by modern views of Greek culture, on the one hand, and, of the nature of religion, on the other. Both continue to influence scholarship to the present day. As regards modern views of Greek culture, we may note how in proposing a structuralist interpretation of Greek polytheism Vernant asked: 'a

⁹⁷ Cf. Csapo (2005), p. xi.

⁹⁸ As Henrichs underscores, 'so formen wir sie ständig aufs neue nach unseren eigenen Gesichtspunkten, die sich zwar an den tradierten Fakten orientieren, aber über sie hinausweisen müssen, wenn sie relevant und aussagekräftig bleiben sollen . . . Die Götter Griechenlands werden sich auch weiterhin in dem Maße wandeln, in dem sich unser Griechenbild wandelt. Darin liegt paradoxerweise ihre Dauerhaftigkeit und ihre Überlebenschance auch für die Zukunft.' Henrichs (1987), p. 33.

scattered and heterogeneous pantheon, a mythology of bits and pieces: if this was the polytheism of the Greeks, how could these men, whose exacting rigor in the realms of intellectual consistency is extolled, have lived their religious life in a kind of chaos?⁹⁹ From K.O. Müller's manly and heroic Dorians to Vernant's logicians we see different generations of scholars predicating different qualities onto the Greeks and construing, accordingly, Greek religion. We may note how in the history of the discipline the portrayal of Greek polytheism as a logically structured system closely follows on a period, when under the influence of anthropology, the focus was placed on 'primitive' and 'irrational' aspects.

As far as modern views about the nature of religion are concerned, we may recall that for scholars like H.D. Müller or Curtius the view that the Greek gods had tightly defined, distinct functions as held at their time by advocates of physical interpretations was grounded in the misconception that religion was a product of rational thought. As we saw, both H.D. Müller and Curtius followed Schleiermacher in regarding religion to be based on the feeling of absolute dependence on God, which, in their eyes, required the worship of universal gods—much like the Christian God. Greek polytheism, which to structuralist scholars attests to the rationality of the Greek mind, was to them a contingent amalgam to be brushed aside in order for the true nature of Greek piety with its source in the emotional needs of the human heart to emerge. The application of structuralist principles to the study of Greek polytheism has undoubtedly yielded insightful and subtle interpretations of the Greek gods. However, one need not share H.D. Müller's or Curtius' conception of religion to ask what role do the fundamentally intellectual structuralist approaches accord to the emotions of ancient worshippers?¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Zeitlin (1991), pp. 271–2. Cf. Versnel (2011), p. 28. We may compare Welcker who in support of his own view of Greek religion posed the question: 'Wie sollten gerade die Griechen, so bedachtsam, streng, fleißig, formgerecht, folgerecht fortschreitend in ihrer Sprache, im Vers, in der Gestaltung der Sage, in der Schule der Bildnerei, regel- und zuchtlos in der Götterlehre seyn?' Welcker (1857), p. 122.

¹⁰⁰ For a recent study of religious emotions in antiquity see the part on 'Emotions in the Interaction Between Mortals and Gods', in A. Chaniotis (ed.), *Unveiling Emotions. Sources and Methods for the Study of Emotions in the Greek World* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2012), pp. 175–291. On the increasing interest in current scholarship in the study of emotions in the ancient world see A. Chaniotis, 'Introduction', in Chaniotis (2012), pp. 11–36 at p. 15, Chaniotis (2013), pp. 171–2, P. Borgeaud and

In addition, we have seen how the central role of God in nineteenth-century scholars' understanding of religion was reflected in the emphasis they placed on the gods and especially on Zeus. Conversely, the comparative decline of interest in the Greek gods in later scholarship had in part to do with the prevalence of modern secular approaches to religion which deprioritize god(s). The portrayal of Greek religion continues to change in relation to 'what religion is to our time', to use a phrase of Momigliano.¹⁰¹ In this context, it should be underlined that, though with the secularization of the discipline the study of Greek religion is no longer as closely related to theology as it once was, to this day, as Parker points out, 'many professional scholars of ancient religion are children of pastors [like many of their nineteenth-century predecessors, as we saw], or lapsed believers.' With the weakening of the social influence of traditional religion in Europe, Parker suggests, 'many are intrigued, it may be guessed, by a form of life more characteristic of their parents' or grandparents' generation than of their own'.¹⁰² The predominantly Christian or post-Christian background of students of Greek religion accounts in part for the role that Christianity continues to play in scholarship on Greek religion. If, as we saw, for most of the nineteenth century the main tendency was to lay stress on, or invent similarities between Greek religion and Christianity, in contemporary scholarship there has been a shift of emphasis towards the differences between them. In both cases, Christianity retains a privileged role as the religion in relation to which Greek religion is positioned. It remains to be seen if this 'special relationship' that has existed between Christianity and Greek religion ultimately ever since the time of the latter's demise will be revised or complemented in the future, not least as the study of Greek religion increasingly opens up to scholars from non-Christian religious or cultural backgrounds. As an example of how contemporary political and religious developments continue to affect scholarly interest in Greek religion and may influence which religions it is to be juxtaposed to, we may also note that in the preface to the new edition of his handbook on Greek religion Burkert states: 'Sinn und Funktion von Religion ist heute, zumal durch die Konfrontation mit dem

A.-C. Rendu Loisel (eds.), *Violentes Émotions. Approches Comparatistes* (Geneva: Droz, 2009).

¹⁰¹ Momigliano (1987a), p. 43.

¹⁰² Parker (2011), p. vii.

Islam, in neuer Weise in Frage gestellt. Die alten Religionen, die vor Judentum, Christentum und Islam dauerhaft Wirkung geübt haben, dürften umso mehr Aufmerksamkeit erwarten, und sei es als "Museum der Gegenbeispiele".¹⁰³

As we have seen, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have witnessed the increasing professionalization and secularization of the study of Greek religion, but has this turned Greek religion into 'a subject of curious, but disinterested enquiry'?¹⁰⁴ Greek religion and its gods may no longer serve as a proxy for the settling of confessional scores, however, a lot appears still to be vested in their interpretation—from different propositions about the nature of religion and its role in history and society, to the significance of the Greek past for the present to the relation between West and East.

¹⁰³ Burkert (2011), p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Murray (2010), pp. 127–8.

APPENDIX

Apollo in Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Scholarship

In the wake of the writings of Nietzsche, Rohde, and Harrison, Dionysos is often regarded as having displaced Apollo (and Zeus) from scholarly spotlight.¹ Nevertheless, Apollo certainly continued to receive major attention throughout the twentieth century and in the beginning of the twenty-first.²

The question of the geographic origins of Apollo's worship continued to be contested in the twentieth century. Writing in the mid-1930s Solders stated that discussions focused on the question whether Apollo was a Greek or a pre-Greek, a Hellenic or an Asiatic god.³ The theory of Apollo's Asian origins was upheld most notably by Wilamowitz and later by Nilsson. Bethe, on the other hand, argued for a Greek Apollo.⁴ Other scholars like Harris suggested a Northern origin.⁵ To the present day the geographic origins of the worship of Apollo remain disputed.⁶

The solar interpretation of Apollo rapidly declined from the late 1900s onwards. One of its most eminent critics besides Farnell was Wilamowitz—an enemy of *Natursymbolik* in the words of Kern, or, in his own, of ancient and modern *Physikotheologie*.⁷ In his Oxford lecture on Apollo in 1908 Wilamowitz argued that the solar interpretation was a theological explanation, a product of rationalization. As such, it was at variance with his conception of religion which stressed emotion—as it had been in the case of earlier critics. As we saw, Wilamowitz asserted that the Greeks 'believed in Apollo not because he was a personification, but because he was a person and

¹ On the history of the modern fascination with, and study of, Dionysos see Baeumer (2006), Henrichs (1984), Henrichs (1993), Schlesier (1998), Schlesier (2008), McGinty (1978), Leege (2008), Kippenberg (2002), pp. 100–5, Konaris (2011).

² On the treatment of Apollo in twentieth-century scholarship see Versnel (1994), pp. 289–334.

³ S. Solders, 'Der ursprüngliche Apollon', *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 32, 1935, pp. 142–55 at p. 142.

⁴ E. Bethe, 'Apollo, der Hellene', in *ANTIΔΩPON. Festschrift Jacob Wackernagel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1923), pp. 14–21.

⁵ For a survey of different theories see Solders (1935) and R.D. Miller, *The Origin and Original Nature of Apollo* (Philadelphia: Times and News, 1939), pp. 4–12.

⁶ See the discussion in Graf (2009), pp. 130–42, Bremmer (2010), p. 4.

⁷ Kern (1938), p. 315, Wilamowitz (1895a), p. xiii.

a God'.⁸ Recalling K.O. Müller's or Curtius' rejection of physical interpretations, Wilamowitz had pronounced even more emphatically in his earlier *Isyllos von Epidauros*: 'It is in the human soul that the gods are created. It is not only wrong, it is sacrilegious to look for them in the external world and turn Apollo into a soulless ball of fire.'⁹

In an indication of the change in scholarship in the entry on Apollo in the second volume of the eleventh edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1910) the solar interpretation was said not to find 'general acceptance' any longer, although its author, J.H. Freese, added that 'no doubt some features of his character can be readily explained on this assumption'.¹⁰ By the mid-1920s, R. Harris stated that 'it is now fairly certain that he [Apollo] was not originally a sun god'.¹¹ His own Frazerian theory that 'Apollo is simply the apple tree with the sacred mistletoe upon it'¹² has not found universal acceptance.¹³

In *Die Götter Griechenlands* (1929) W.F. Otto as well rejected the theory of Apollo's solar origins. Captivated by the Apollo of Zeus' temple at Olympia,

⁸ Wilamowitz (1908), p. 28. Cf. Fowler (2009), p. 189. In *Glaube der Hellenen*, Wilamowitz reiterated that 'die elementare Natur war ihm [Apollo] immer fremd gewesen'. Wilamowitz (1932), p. 168.

⁹ U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Isyllos von Epidauros* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1886), p. 97, n. 75. Cf. 'Die Wurzel des Glaubens an diesen Gott zu finden ist ausgeschlossen, denn die Griechen haben ihn als eine fertige göttliche Person vorgefunden, die weder mit irgendeiner elementaren Naturkraft noch mit einer besonderen Sphäre des menschlichen Lebens wesentlich verbunden war.' Wilamowitz (1931), p. 326, and his broader view that 'die gottheit hat keine andere wohnung als das menschliche herz, und selbst wenn sie sich im elemente offenbart, das sie noch am reinsten reflectirt, so ist das so wenig ihre wahre gestalt, wie wenn der Erdgeist im feuer erscheint "in widerlicher gestalt."' U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Einleitung in die griechische Tragödie* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1907), pp. 98–9. If Wilamowitz opposed elemental interpretations, he was inclined, in the manner of Goethe, to regard the divine as revealed in nature: 'Sonne, Mond, auch Morgen- und Abendstern, müssen jeden empfänglichen Menschen, der mit der Natur lebt und sie zumal beim Aufgang und Niedergang in ihrer eigenen Schönheit und der Wirkung ihres Lichtes anschaut, zur Andacht und zur unmittelbaren Schau des Göttlichen stimmen.' Wilamowitz (1931), p. 254. Cf. his view on the sanctity of Delphi: 'Noch heute wird jeder, der für die Offenbarung des Göttlichen in der Natur empfänglich ist, in Delphi empfinden, daß er auf einer heiligen Stätte steht': Wilamowitz (1932), p. 27. For Wilamowitz, however, 'Wohl offenbart sich die Gottheit unmittelbar in der Natur, aber das sind die niederen Weißen' Wilamowitz (1928), p. 133. On Wilamowitz's *Naturgefühl* see Henrichs (1985), pp. 267–8.

¹⁰ J.H. Freese, 'Apollo', *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 2 (New York, 1910, eleventh edition), pp. 184–6 at p. 184.

¹¹ R. Harris, 'Apollo at the Back of the North Wind', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* XLV(2), 1925, pp. 229–42 at p. 234.

¹² Harris (1925), p. 234.

¹³ Solders commented that '... dürfte Harris für seinen Apfelgott weder Philologen noch Religionsgeschichtsforscher gewonnen haben'. Solders (1935), p. 144.

Otto hailed Apollo as the most Greek of all the gods.¹⁴ As we have seen, Otto dismissed the view that the Olympians were gods of natural elements. In the case of Apollo, he characteristically stated that 'his sublime being was founded neither on an element nor on a natural process', though he granted that he became associated with the sun relatively early.¹⁵ In his account of Apollo Otto laid stress on the notion of remoteness.¹⁶ Unlike Dionysos' nature, which willed ecstasy and, hence, proximity, Apollo's nature willed 'clarity and form, therefore, *distance*'.¹⁷ In contrast to Christianizing portrayals of Apollo such as Curtius', Otto emphasized that the Apolline 'ideal of distance' stood in marked difference not only to Dionysian, but also to Christian proximity between God and the human individual.¹⁸ Thus his account of Apollo combined elements of the conventional idealizing tradition of German classical scholarship with a Nietzschean opposition of Greece to Christianity.¹⁹ In *Theophania* Otto further argued that like the other major gods Apollo formed 'an entire world'. The distinctive quality of 'the unified world of Apollo'—was purity, and ultimately music and rhythm. Once again appealing to the insights of poets, Otto cited Hölderlin's dictum that 'everything is rhythm' to proclaim that 'Rhythm and music are at the foundations of all things'.²⁰ Otto's view of Apollo as the distant god has been highly influential in scholarship. Kerényi reiterated that Apollo is the remote deity.²¹ For Burkert, Apollo remains

¹⁴ Otto (1929), pp. 78–9, 99. It is worth comparing Wilamowitz's response to the representation of Apollo on the temple of Zeus at Olympia: 'da hat ein Peloponnesier den Gott seines Glaubens in seiner ruhigen und gerade damit jeden irdischen Widerstand bändigenden Majestät über dem wüsten Getümmel so hinzustellen gewußt, wie es ein Ionier nicht vermocht hätte.' Wilamowitz (1932), p. 170.

¹⁵ Otto (1929), p. 101. In his late *Theophania* (1956), Otto conceded that the pre-Hellenic Apollo was an Asian sun-god, but argued that in the Olympian religion of the Greeks he revealed himself anew, all of his old qualities being reinterpreted in more spiritual terms: Otto (1956), pp. 97–8. This recalls the view on the development of Apollo of nineteenth-century scholars like Welcker.

¹⁶ 'Apollon der Gott der Ferne ist und als solcher der Gott der Reinheit und der Erkenntnis.' Otto (1929), pp. 68, 82.

¹⁷ Otto (1929), p. 99. In *Dionysos*, Otto would celebrate the eventual rapprochement between Apollo and Dionysos as one of the most sublime moments of Greek religion: Otto (1933), pp. 192–3. On Otto's view of Dionysos see Henrichs (1987), pp. 27–8, McGinty (1978), pp. 141–80, Leege (2011).

¹⁸ Otto (1929), pp. 99–100. Cf. Donnerberg (1961), pp. 97–8.

¹⁹ Cf. Burkert (2011), p. 12.

²⁰ Otto (1956), pp. 106–7. On Otto's account of Apollo and Hölderlin's influence see Donnerberg (1961), pp. 97–8.

²¹ In addition, Kerényi laid stress on the contrasts inherent in the conception of Apollo: 'according to his character he is both darkness and clarity': K. Kerényi, 'Unsterblichkeit und Apollonreligion' (1933), *Apollon. Studien über antike Religion und Humanität* (Vienna/Amsterdam/Leipzig: Leo, 1937), pp. 37–58 at pp. 48, 54. On Kerényi's view of Apollo see J. Solomon, 'Translator's afterword', in K. Kerényi, *Apollo. The Wind, the Spirit, and the God. Four Studies* (Dallas: Spring, 1983), pp. 63–7.

the 'God of Afar';²² in the 1990s Versnel stated, 'Apollo is the remote god, as everybody will gladly concede'.²³ Yet if the notion of remoteness appears to capture certain key aspects of Apollo, Apollo may also arguably be viewed as a god of proximity to humans, both symbolic (an ancestral deity as Patroos and a mediator between the divine and the human world as an oracular deity) and physical (as Agyieus).

After the decline of solar interpretations, an emphasis on vegetation, and later on initiation, came to play a prominent role in the interpretation of Apollo.²⁴ As we saw, already in *Griechische Feste* of 1906, Nilsson had dissociated himself from the theory of Apollo's solar origins. In the first edition of his *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion* (1941), he swiftly cast it aside, referring the reader for its refutation to Farnell's *Cults*.²⁵ In accordance with his broader stress on the agrarian elements of Greek religion Nilsson began his account of Apollo with a discussion of his association with vegetation and with flocks, although he acknowledged that Apollo was not an agrarian god as such.²⁶ As we mentioned, for Nilsson vegetation provided no all-explaining key. He underlined that the conception of the Greek gods tended to develop in the course of time without necessarily adhering to a pattern of linear evolution from a hypothetical original core function. This is especially the case in his account of Apollo of whom Nilsson stated that 'in the course of time, the core of his nature has shifted more than any other god's'.²⁷ According to Nilsson, Apollo's origins went back to a Near Eastern apotropaic deity.²⁸ The Greek Apollo, however, appeared primarily as an oracular god during the archaic period while in the classical period he became god of the arts and was identified with the sun.²⁹ As Versnel notes, by comparison to earlier solar interpretations, 'the pursuit of a rigorous unity appears to have been abandoned . . . [a] monolithic model has been replaced by a historicizing concept based on evolution and amalgamation'.³⁰ As we have mentioned, Nilsson's closing words on Apollo in his *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion* recall the 'enlightened Apollo' of nineteenth-century scholars like Curtius: 'And so Apollo became the most Greek of all the gods: the luminous, sublime youth, the protector of music and spiritual life, of moderation and rational order. It is of very little importance for Greek religion what he originally was; all that matters is what the Greeks made him. The ennoblement of the ancient god from Asia Minor and his elevation

²² Burkert (1985), p. 148. Burkert (2011), p. 230.

²³ Versnel (1994), p. 315.

²⁴ See Versnel (1994), pp. 292–3, 313–16, 330–2.

²⁵ Nilsson (1941), p. 499.

²⁶ Nilsson (1941), pp. 498, 504. On Nilsson's account of Apollo see Versnel (1994), pp. 292–3 and Donnenberg (1961), pp. 91–4, who compares it to Otto's.

²⁷ Nilsson (1941), p. 498.

²⁸ Nilsson (1941), p. 531.

²⁹ Nilsson (1941), p. 499.

³⁰ Versnel (1994), p. 293.

to the expression of authentic Greekness is one of the greatest intellectual feats of the Greek people.³¹

The view that Apollo encapsulates 'Greekness' remains potent in scholarship to the present day: Guthrie reiterated that Apollo was 'the very embodiment of the Hellenic spirit'.³² Burkert begins his account of Apollo in his *Griechische Religion* stating that 'Apollo has often been described, not without reason, as the "most Greek of the gods" . . . That the youth, the Kouros, was raised to its ideal, gives Greek culture as a whole its peculiar character; purified and elevated, this ideal is manifest in the divine; the god of this culture is Apollo'.³³ We may note Wilamowitz's objection to this view: 'It was after all only one side of Greek religious feeling that the god revealed and demanded. To many it seems to cover all that is characteristically Hellenic. They fail to note that it is as alien to Homer as it is to the great Athenians, with the single exception of Sophocles'.³⁴ Solomon further points out: 'and yet the Greeks and especially the Athenians . . . hardly seem to have considered Apollo to be the God "most Greek of the Greek gods"'.³⁵

In the course of the twentieth century, some attempts have been made to revive the theory of Apollo's solar origins without gaining acceptance.³⁶ As regards the question of the time when it occurred, Voss' view has come to

³¹ Nilsson (1941), p. 532. One of the most extreme variations on the theme of Apollo's association with 'pure' Greekness appears in Dirlmeier's 'Apollon, Gott und Erzieher des hellenischen Adels' of 1939. Dirlmeier, director of the department of *Klassische Philologie und Altertumskunde* of the *Forschungsgemeinschaft Deutsches Ahnenerbe*, portrayed Apollo, as the title suggests, as the 'Erzieher der Hellenen, die adeligen Blutes waren'. Dirlmeier further stressed Apollo's association with eugenics: 'als Platon im 4. Jahr. seinen riesenhaften, aber nicht utopischen [my emphasis] Plan faßte, durch Zuchtgesetze von unvorstellbarer Strenge das von den Vätern überkommene Lebensgut wiederherzustellen, da war dies kein biologischer Materialismus, sondern als verantwortlicher Erneuerer des Vergangenen wußte er sich in einem besonderen Sinne mit Apollon verbunden . . . er hat noch ausdrücklich gesagt, daß auch die eugenische Gesetzgebung zutiefst mit der Religion der Väter, mit Apollon verbunden sei.' F. Dirlmeier, 'Apollon, Gott und Erzieher des hellenischen Adels', *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 36, 1939, pp. 277–99 at pp. 287, 297. Cf. Detienne (1998), p. 41.

³² W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods* (London: Methuen, 1950), p. 73.

³³ Burkert (1985), p. 143, Burkert (2011), p. 223.

³⁴ Wilamowitz (1908), p. 41. Cf. Fowler (2009), pp. 189, 193. In the eyes of Wilamowitz, it was another deity, Athena, who represented 'the embodiment of the most genuinely Hellenic spirit': U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, 'Athena' (1921), *Kleine Schriften*, vol. II (Berlin: Weidmann, 1937), pp. 36–53 at p. 36.

³⁵ Solomon (1983), p. 63.

³⁶ One of the more recent is A. Moreau's 'Quand Apollon Devint Soleil', in B. Bakhouché, A. Moreau, and J.-C. Turpin (eds.), *Les Astres. Les Astres et les Mythes la Description du Ciel*, vol. I (Montpellier: Publications de la Recherche, Université Paul Valéry, 1996), pp. 11–35. For further supporters of the solar interpretation in the twentieth century see Versnel (1994), p. 292, n. 9. See also Bernal (2006), pp. 454–77.

prevail: like Artemis' association with the moon, Apollo's association with the sun tends to be seen in modern scholarship as a development of the classical period.³⁷

As Parker notes, in the last quarter of the twentieth century, Apollo attracted the attention of some of the most acute students of Greek religion.³⁸ In his 'Apellai und Apollon' (1975), Burkert reiterated the view that the name 'Apollon' was connected to the month Apellaios and the institution of the apellai,³⁹ and revived K.O. Müller's theory of Apollo's Dorian origins.⁴⁰ Drawing on Harrison's view of Apollo as the arch-ephebe Burkert underscored Apollo's association with ephebes to be initiated into the adult civic community.⁴¹ The association between Apollo and ephebes as well as post-ephebes was explored further by F. Graf in the cases of Apollo Delphinios (1979) and Lykeios (1985) and by M. Jameson in the case of Apollo Lykeios at Athens (1980).⁴² Moreover, in his comparative study of Apollo and Mars (1994) Versnel placed himself in the tradition of Harrison and Burkert and portrayed Apollo as 'the god of transition from the old to the new'. He argued that 'Apollo is the prototypical image or projection of the *ephēboi* during

³⁷ Versnel (1994), p. 292, Graf (2009), p. 151. According to Parker, it 'can be taken, at most, as indicating a potentiality inherent in the Greek conception of deity'. Parker (2011), p. 77.

³⁸ Parker (2005), p. 393.

³⁹ W. Burkert, 'Apellai und Apollon', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 118, 1975, pp. 1–21 at pp. 8–11. Cf. Burkert (2011), p. 224.

⁴⁰ 'Die "alte These K.O. Müllers" ... daß Apollon von Haus aus ein Gott der Dorier sei, scheint sich zu bestätigen.' Burkert (1975), p. 8. In his *Griechische Religion*, Burkert discerns three components in the prehistory of Apolline worship: a Dorian, a Cretan-Minoan and a Syrian-Hittite: Burkert (1977), p. 227, Burkert (2011), p. 224. Cf. Graf (2009), pp. 137–8, Versnel (1994), p. 313, n. 81. As mentioned, the etymology and origins of Apollo remain disputed: Bremmer (2010), p. 4.

⁴¹ 'nicht minder ist Apellon-Apollon Inbegriff jenes, Wendepunkts der Jugendblüte,' *τέλος ἡβης*, das der Ephebe erreicht hat' Burkert (1975), p. 18. Cf. Burkert (1977), p. 227, Burkert (2011), p. 225, Henrichs (1987), p. 31, Versnel (1994), pp. 313–14.

⁴² 'Apollon Delphinios steht einerseits an manchen Orten in enger Beziehung zum staatlichen Leben der Gemeinde, die ihn verehrt; andererseits wird er gerne mit dem Ephebenalter und besonders mit den um diese kritische Zeit besorgten religiösen Institutionen verbunden': F. Graf, 'Apollon Delphinios', *Museum Helveticum* 36, 1979, pp. 2–22 at p. 7. 'Mit zwei Bereichen erscheint der Gott verbunden, mit dem politischen Leben der Polis und mit der Ephebie: betont ist dabei der politische Neubeginn und die militärische Seite der Ephebie.' F. Graf, *Nordionische Kulte. Religionsgeschichtliche und epigraphische Untersuchungen zu den Kulte von Chios, Erythrai, Klazomenai und Phokaia* (Rome: Schweizerisches Institut in Rom, 1985), p. 225. 'Apollo Lykeios at Athens conspicuously represents the culmination of the initiatory, integrating process. He is the god of the adult males, hoplites who have passed their tests and have been fully accepted.' M. Jameson, 'Apollo Lykeios in Athens', *Archaiognosia* 1, 1980, pp. 213–36 at pp. 231–2. On Graf's and Jameson's view of Apollo see Versnel (1994), pp. 330–2.

their wanderings outside civilization'.⁴³ Although acknowledging that the studies on initiation which started to proliferate in the 1980s and the 1990s were not all 'equally convincing', Versnel expressed confidence 'that this [is] one of those theories which will last and gain a deserved place in the interpretation of the god Apollo'.⁴⁴

In a collective volume that appeared in 1994 the persistent search for Apollo's elusive origins is reflected in the title: *Apollo. Origins and Influences*.⁴⁵ In the introduction the editor, J. Solomon, stated of the contributors that 'we have made a fresh effort to understand not only the original essence of Apollo, but his multiple variations, hybrids and influences'.⁴⁶ We note how after a period in scholarship during which the notion of Apollo's 'original essence' was questioned it here re-appeared as a major research question. In the volume's first essay, Nagy undertook an etymological analysis of Apollo's name with a view to shedding light on the god's essence. He suggested that the name 'Apollon' was connected to the verb 'apeileo' and indicated that its bearer was 'the god of authoritative speech, the one who presides over all manner of speech-acts'.⁴⁷

A stress on Apollo's association with speech is also visible in Dumézil's account of Apollo, to turn to Francophone scholarship. As we mentioned, Dumézil was a leading advocate of the comparative study of Indo-European religions in the twentieth century. Whereas nineteenth-century scholars in the tradition of Indo-European Comparative Mythology like Kuhn had compared Apollo to Rudra, or had sought to discover the etymology of his name with the aid of Sanskrit like Max Müller, in *Apollon Sonore* (1982), Dumézil drew a comparison between Apollo and the Vedic deity, Vāc, a personification of voice. According to Dumézil, the comparison provided insight into Apollo's role as a patron of the modes and effects of articulate voice.⁴⁸

More recently, in his revealingly entitled, *Apollon le Couteau à la Main* (1998) M. Detienne sought to highlight Apollo's 'dark side', placing the focus on his association with such aspects as impurity and sensuality. Furthermore, Detienne underlined Apollo's role as a builder, a founder, and a delimitator of space.⁴⁹ In P. Monbrun's *Les Voix d'Apollon* (2007) it is the figure of the

⁴³ Versnel (1994), pp. 315, 316.

⁴⁴ Versnel (1994), pp. 315–16. The theme of initiation continues to play a major role in studies of Apollo, although the paradigm of initiation in general has since come to be questioned. For a reflective evaluation see Graf (2003).

⁴⁵ Solomon (1994).

⁴⁶ J. Solomon, 'Introduction', in Solomon (1994), pp. ix–xii at p. xii.

⁴⁷ Nagy (1994), p. 7.

⁴⁸ G. Dumézil, *Apollon Sonore et Autres Essais* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982).

⁴⁹ Detienne (1998), pp. 11, 26ff., 237, Parker (2011), p. 92.

archer that was seen as reflecting the essence of Apollo.⁵⁰ As Parker notes, 'incompatible Apollos proliferate!'⁵¹ F. Graf's *Apollo* (2009) provides a concise yet comprehensive, theoretically informed examination of the different facets of Apollo in the light of the latest finds. After the appearance of a spate of 'unifying' interpretive attempts in the course of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, in his book Graf renounces the search for unity: 'In mapping the provinces of Apollo's activities, I will not even try to find a unity that would underlie the different roles.'⁵²

In his 'Apollo and Mars' Versnel observed how changes in interpretive model frequently resulted in the 'shifting of several elements from more central to more peripheral parts'.⁵³ In stark contrast to the prominent position once given to Apollo's association with the sun in the writings of both adherents and opponents of the solar interpretation, in contemporary scholarship it tends to be swiftly glossed over,⁵⁴ even on those occasions when its interpretive value is considered.⁵⁵ Apollo's association with the sun may no longer be tinged with the connotations of 'Oriental mysticism' that drove the reaction against it in the nineteenth century. However, it would seem that the present emphasis on Apollo's cultural and civic functions in conformity to the broader tendency in scholarship towards these aspects since the second half of the twentieth century leaves little place for it (as for his broader relation to the natural world). Yet the association with the sun indisputably became an important aspect of Apollo which deserves attention.

⁵⁰ P. Monbrun, *Les Voix d'Apollon* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires, 2007), p. 12, Parker (2011), p. 92.

⁵¹ Parker (2011), p. 92.

⁵² Graf (2009), p. 5. Cf. 'The historian feels an intellectual pull to construct these fields into an underlying unity. Such a construction might satisfy a thinker's need of neatness; but it sacrifices so much historical diversity that it loses all value for the historian of religion.' Graf (2009), p. 180. One may draw a comparison with Wernicke's entry on Apollo in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie* in 1896 in which after a profusion of theories postulating the original unity of Apolline religion in contemporary scholarship, the author refused to speculate on the original essence of Apollo focusing instead on the exposition of the different aspects of his cults: 'aus dem Gesagten ergibt sich, dass von Bedeutung und Wesen des A. in dem Sinne eines ursprünglichen Gottesbegriffes nicht die Rede sein kann. Es kann sich hier nur um eine zusammenfassende Darstellung der vielseitigen Bedeutung handeln, die der A.-Kult durch Zusammenschmelzung und Weiterbildung allmählich in historischer Zeit gewonnen hat.' Wernicke (1896), p. 8.

⁵³ Versnel (1994), p. 293.

⁵⁴ Thus in Burkert's discussion of Apollo in Burkert (2011), pp. 223–30, Apollo's identification with the sun is only mentioned in the very last line.

⁵⁵ In discussing the agricultural associations of the Pyanepsia Parker writes: 'a brief nostalgia might even seize the interpreter at this point for the discredited old understanding of Apollo as a sun-god.' Parker (2005), pp. 417–18.

Like Artemis' association with the moon, it illustrates the capacity of Greek polytheism to reconfigure its gods and invites questions as to how it may have affected both the perception of other aspects of Apollo and his relation to other deities.

If no longer as a solar god, or as a Dorian *Stammesgott*, in the beginning of the third millennium Apollo evidently continues to be an object of interest and controversy. As has been seen, a broad range of different interpretations of Apollo have appeared in the history of the discipline. By drawing attention to different sides of the god, they have enriched our perspective; however, attempts to privilege a single theme as revealing the alleged 'essential quality' of Apollo remain of dubious plausibility. The alternative does not have to be to give up on the notion of coherence altogether. It has long been noted that, by the standards of the Greeks themselves, such aspects as, for example, prophecy, healing and music were associated with each other.⁵⁶ Looking for clusters of coherent functions within the broad portfolio of Apollo and how they interacted with each other, while at the same time leaving space for the contingent and the context-specific may be a course worth steering between the minimalist rejection of all unity and the maximalist search for a single, all-explaining quality.

⁵⁶ For example, by Farnell (1907a), pp. 233, 244–5.

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